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ITALIAN OPERA

GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN

SPRING 1962

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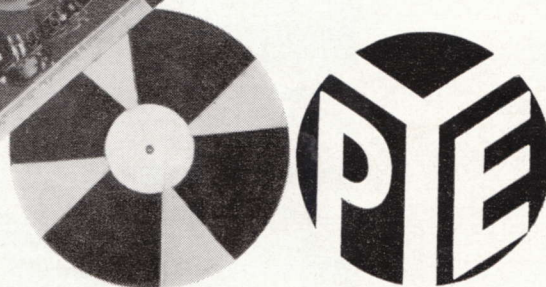
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Opera is an Italian invention and to this present day remains Italy's most important contribution to the art of Music and to the gaiety of nations. The earliest operatic example, *Eurydice* by Peri and Caccini in Florence in 1600, showed an entirely new type of music, which received various names; sometimes called "La Nuova Musica" or "Dramma per Musica". This new style was taken up by the Italian musicians, poets and writers (librettists), artists and the cultured patrons of the Arts with such intense enthusiasm, that by the year 1670 the interest had spread not only to the entire Italian nation but also through France, Germany, England and to the city of Dublin.

During the 17th century yet another Italian invention reached its climax in the work of Stradavarius and his forerunners. The discovery of the violin, viola and violoncello, whose beautiful varieties of tone superceded the inferior quality of the viols, gave an invaluable impetus to this new movement and in producing the great instrumental virtuosi, laid the foundations of the modern orchestra. By the beginning of the 18th century the vocal virtuosi appeared with the introduction of *bel canto* and the Italian influence in music was then complete and absolute.

By the year 1700, Dublin had become one of the most musically active centres in Europe. A large number of musical societies were in being, among them the Hibernian "Catch" Club (the oldest body of its kind still in existence), while concerts for charitable purposes, "Benefit" concerts and performances of Ballad Opera became the vogue. Crow Street Music Hall was built by the Dublin Academy of Music in 1730 "for the practice of Italian Musick", and the "New Musick Hall" in Fishamble Street was opened in October 1741. Here Handel gave the first of his series of Dublin concerts on December 23rd of the same year, and on April 8th, 1742, he gave the first public performance of the *Messiah*, amid unprecedented scenes of enthusiasm. Handel's visit was followed by that of Thomas Arne, the English composer who produced his *Masque*—"Comus" and his opera *Rosamunde* at the Theatre Royal in Smock Alley.

During the 18th century many fine musicians lived in Dublin including the eminent violinist, Geminiani, famous pupil of Corelli. He came to us from London and eventually died here in 1762. A Dublin musician, Thomas Roseingrave studied in Italy and became a life-long friend and disciple of Domenico Scarlatti, son of the great Alessandro. Thanks to the zeal of Roseingrave, Domenico's works became quickly diffused. He published forty-two of Domenico's "Suites and Lessons" in London in 1739 and many other works. He also made his friend's music known by playing it at concerts, and even performed it during the intervals at operatic performances. The *Dublin Journal* for January 1753, announced that "the opera, '*Phaedra and Hippolitus*' of Thomas Roseingrave, will be performed at the Music Hall at Fishamble Street. . . Between the acts, Mr. Roseingrave will perform Scarlatti's 'Lessons' on the Harpsichord". Thomas Roseingrave died in Dunleary 1766. Talented amateurs were plentiful.

With the passing of the Act of Union in 1800 and the abolition of the Irish Parliament, Dublin may have lost some of its significance as a focal centre of political and social life but the interest in the theatre and music, especially Opera, increased so much that by the end of the 19th century an unusually high degree of artistic knowledge and discernment was to be found amongst the citizens. During this century Dublin produced three outstanding composers, John Field (1782-1837) who gained international fame as a pianist and a composer; Michael Balfe (1808-1870) composer of *The Bohemian Girl*, *The Siege of Rochelle* and other highly successful Operas; Vincent Wallace (1812-1865) was born in Waterford but was trained in Dublin, composer of the Operas, *Maritana* and *Lurline*. Balfe and Wallace were considered leading



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lights in the new English School of Ballad Opera.

The foundation stone of a new Theatre Royal was laid on October 14th 1820, in an area, known as Town's End, which had never known a theatre before. Prior to 1820, this site was occupied by the Dublin Society, now known as the Royal Dublin Society. Henry Harris of Covent Garden, London, after the closing of the Crow Street Theatre, obtained the lease for £610 per year. The Theatre Royal, Hawkins Street, opened on Thursday, January 18th 1821, with Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* and the rest of the year was filled up with plays with famous actors, concerts, music recitals given by leading European *virtuosi* of the day, and some excellent musical and dramatic performances by local amateur groups. On July 9th there was a production of *The Beggars' Opera*. On August 22nd King George the Fourth was present when Sheridan's *Dianna*, and the Farce of *St. Patrick's Day* were performed. This pattern of programmes, with the addition of an occasional Opera in English, was continued until the first properly organised Italian Opera season in Dublin, commenced on October 14th, 1829, under the management of Signor de Begnis, who at that time was considered the best Figaro in the world. The Operas performed were Paer's *Agnese*, and five Operas by Rossini, *Il Turco in Italia*, *Tancredi*, *Italiani in Algiers*, *Othello* and *La Gazza Ladra*. "Although De Begnis lived in D'Olier Street, he insisted upon having a car to drive him round the corner to the stage-door. He was frequently remonstrated with on this unnecessary proceeding, but without effect".

The Italian season established itself at once and became an important feature in the life of Dublin. Except for a few occasions this city had at least one Italian season each year, indeed, quite often there was a return visit from a particular company, or an extra visit from an entirely new company. A record was created in 1857 when one company gave four seasons, the prima-donnas being Mdles. Grisi and Catherine Hayes (born in Limerick), Mdmes. Bosio and Piccolomini; the fourth engagement was notable

for the first appearance of a great tenor Guilini. This wonderful state of affairs lasted from 1821 until 1879, that is a short time before the Theatre was destroyed by fire. Every renowned singer of the 18th century was heard here and the most successful were delighted and much flattered by the warmth of the Irish applause. Such artistes as Jenny Lind, Adelina Patti, Grisi, Titiens, Trebelli and Albani are but a few of the sopranos who were singled out for special treatment by their admirers. After the performance the *Diva* in her carriage would be escorted from the stage-door to her hotel by a large procession, the horses having being removed, some male members of the crowd drawing the carriage. The *Diva* would then appear on the balcony or at an open window of the hotel and sing a song to a crowded street. Although the contraltos, tenors and basses did not receive this special treatment they were nevertheless singers of equally fine quality with the prima-donnas and enjoyed much adulation. Occasionally an outstanding singer from England would be included in the caste. There were two in particular, Sims Reeves (Tenor) and Charles Santley (Bass-baritone) who appeared for several years and became prime favourites. Both these gentlemen sang in the first production in Dublin of Gounod's *Faust* and Weber's *Oberon* in October 1863.

Owing to the rivalry of the regular seasons of Opera in English, in the same theatre, the Italian companies endeavoured to present an Opera new to Dublin as often as possible. Indeed several of these were new operas in every sense, as composers as Meyerbeer, Ambroise Thomas, Gounod, Verdi and Wagner were alive and producing their works during these years. This rivalry became intensified when a new theatre, the Gaiety, South King Street, under the ownership of the brothers John and Michael Gunn, was opened on the 27th November 1871; with the result that the visiting English Opera Companies left the Theatre Royal and made the Gaiety their home. In 1874 the Royal also became the property of the Gunn Brothers. The Italians continued with renewed vigour at the Royal and their performances





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during 1875 to 1878 reached the highest possible quality. In 1875, a remarkable year, the Italian Company this season came from Covent Garden, and was under the direction of Sir Julius Benedict (composer of *The Lily of Killarney*). This was indeed a company of European stars — *Soprani*: Mdles. Albani, Bianchi, Estelle, Cruise, Stewart, Paoli, and Zara Thalberg (daughter of the great pianist); *Contralti*: Mdles. Phillipini D'Edelsburgh, Ghiotto; *Tenori*: Mons. Naudin, Signor Pavani, and Mons. De Vellier; *Baritoni*: Mons. Maurel and Signor Medica; *Bassi*: Signor Scolari, Signor Tagliafico, Signor Bolli, and Pronti. *Conductor*: Signor Varesi; *Leader*: Mr. R. M. Levey. The season opened on Monday, October 4th, 1875, with Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Here is a notice of the performance from the *Freeman's Journal*, Tuesday, October 5th, 1875:

"The extraordinary interest in Italian Opera which prevails in Dublin at this time of year was manifested last night with all its wonted intensity. The stir and bustle about the exterior of the Theatre were quite as troublesome as usual; and although notices had been duly published that programmes and books of the opera would be sold inside the house, the yelling and importunity outside were not a whit abated. Up to the very last moment the arrivals were fast, and in many cases furious. We say furious, for as a rule a latecomer is in an ill-temper, and disturbs everybody by special privilege. Last night there were many late-comers, and the overture was frequently marred in effect by persons whose exterior would have suggested better manners. This observation is made not indeed with a view of wounding anybody in Dublin, experience has dissolved all such views, and converted suffering into a sort of expectation. So far as the orchestra was heard in the overture it appeared to be adequate, finished, and thoroughly under the command of Signor Varesi. The stringed instruments, without which Mozart is impossible, were tolerably full; and if the effect was not startling, it was satisfactory. A notice to the effect that Signor Pavani being

ill, Mr. Richard Sydney (MacNevin)\* would assume the character of Don Ottavio was posted about the house in quite a wonderful manner; and there was a nervous anxiety lest something should happen to spoil the evening's entertainment. Nothing really did happen, for, notwithstanding Mr. Sydney's disquiet, he succeeded very well, and, under the circumstances, he must have surpassed expectation. The sort of dilemma caused by the sudden illness of an artiste is just of that order in which rapidity of judgment is most essential. Mr. Gunn decided on having a Dublin amateur, and the result proved that Mr. Gunn was right, and that Dublin was rich in talent of a high and educated order. In how many cities in the empire could there be found a private gentleman competent and willing to sing at a few hours' notice the music of Mario and Guiglini in *Don Giovanni*? The answer must suggest something in favour of Dublin, in which the feat has been accomplished, and well accomplished".

\* Grandfather of The Very Rev. Dr. R. MacNevin, P.P.

The repertoire of this Company is worthy of special mention — *Don Giovanni*, *Il Trovatore*, *Fra Diavolo*, *La Sonnambula*, *La Figlia*, *Lucia*, *Dinorah*, *Rigoletto*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Faust*, *I Puritani*, *La favorita*, and *Lohengrin*. (The first performance of Wagner's Opera in Dublin). Thirteen operas in eighteen nights seems a remarkable achievement! There was a further season in this year (1875) from another Italian Company commencing November 15th, for six nights only. Principal artistes — Mesdames Christine Nilsson (first appearance in Dublin), Trebelli-Bettini, Marie Roze, Demeric-Lablache, Bauermeister, and Mdle. Elena Varesi. Signors Gillandi, Campanini, Palladini, Rinaldini, Grazzi, Brignoli, Galassi, Del Puente, Costa, Zaboli, Casaboni, Castelmarty (first appearance in Dublin) and Herr Behrens. Musical Director and Conductor, Signor Calsi. Operas performed were:— *Faust*, *Lucia*, *Martha*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* (benefit of Madame Nilsson), and *La Sonnambula*. The very last season in the old Theatre Royal, in Hawkins



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Street, was given by Mr. Mapleson's Italian Company for twelve nights, commencing Monday, September 2nd, 1878. It is notable for the first performance in Ireland of Bizet's *Carmen*, the title rôle was sung by Mdle. Minnie Hawk. The performance was a tremendous success and *Carmen* became an established favourite. On Monday, February 9th, 1880, the 'Old Royal' was completely destroyed by fire. This was a severe loss for Michael Gunn (his brother John died in 1877).

For many years the Gaiety Theatre provided the main supply of the city's entertainment, for the new Royal was not rebuilt until seventeen years later and re-opening on December 13th, 1897, with Sidney Jones's *The Geisha*, the first of a long series of a new style of light opera, known in England as musical comedy.

When the Gaiety Theatre became the home of Opera it numbered amongst its regular visitors the D'Oyly Carte Company (1876) which introduced each Gilbert and Sullivan Opera as it appeared. The Carl Rosa Company occupied the Gaiety for about three months every year and there were regular visits from Mapleson's Italian Company, under the musical direction of Signor Arditì. Of the Carl Rosa singers the most memorable were Ella Russell, Georgina Burns, Marie Roze, Zèlie de Lussan, Barton McGuckin, Leslie Crotty, Abramoff, Brozel and Hedmond. *Tristan and Isolde* received its first performance in Dublin during Carl Rosa's 1902 season. The conductor on this occasion was Eugene Goossens, the father of the present famous family of musicians. The first performance of an Opera in Irish *Eithne*, by Robert O'Dwyer, was given in May 1910. There was a visit from Sir Thomas Beecham's Company in 1911, and from now on until 1914 there were a number of seasons from Joseph O'Mara's Opera Company.

The Moody-Manners Company was the largest English Opera Company on tour; it had been formed in 1897 and except for one season in the Gaiety, made its home in the new Theatre Royal. The Theatre Royal continued to supply Opera and in the year 1912, during a month's season, the newly formed Quinlan Company gave two complete cycles in English of Wagner's *The Ring of the Niebelungen*. During this season *Tristan and Isolde*, Charpentier's *Louise* and Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West* were performed. Then came the war in 1914.

Although the first World War had begun Opera was still flourishing in Dublin. In the autumn the Moody-Manners Company (at the Gaiety this time)

gave a very successful and interesting season, playing *Fra Diavolo* (Auber); *Satanella* and *The Puritan's Daughter* both by Balfe; *Samson and Delilah* (Saint-Saens); and Meyerbeer's *Star of the North*. Shortly after this the company was disbanded. As an indication of the insatiable desire for operatic music in Dublin there were actually two visits from the O'Mara Company and one from the newly formed Harrison Frewen Company in 1915.

From now on the war steadily increased its influence on the theatrical world generally and on Opera in particular. The next year, 1916, brought us our own political troubles. The O'Mara Company was disbanded and the Carl Rosa closed down temporarily. No serious Opera was heard in Dublin until the autumn of 1924 when the Carl Rosa paid us a short visit, which was notable for the production of a romantic opera, *Shaun the Post* by Dermot MacMurrough (the *nom de plume* of Harold R. White, the Dublin music critic). The Cinema during these troubled years had made great strides and was proving a serious rival to the theatre. The taste of the public had changed and there was no longer any demand for Grand Opera or serious drama. The lightest of musical entertainment from America with all the evils of crooning and song plugging became the rage and in 1935 even the Gaiety management decided to adopt twice-nightly variety entertainments. Zero hour had arrived.

In 1936 the ownership of the Gaiety Theatre changed and with Mr. Louis Elliman in control the future outlook brightened quickly. From the outset Mr. Elliman had the bold policy of giving every possible encouragement to the development of native talent, professional and amateur, and his foresight has long since been justified. During the gloomy period from 1916 to 1936 there was one bright spot. I make special reference to the Rathmines and Rathgar Musical Society. This Society founded as early as 1912, made its first appearance in the Gaiety in 1914. Since then, and until this present year, the R. and R. as it is now affectionately known, have without a break presented two seasons each year—in Spring and Autumn alternating between Gilbert and Sullivan Operas and the best examples of comic operas. The record of the R. and R. is quite unique; not only have all the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan been performed, but also two operas of Arthur Sullivan which are unknown to the younger generation; *Heddon Hall*, in which Sullivan collaborated with Sidney Grundy, and *The Rose of Persia*, the book by Basil Hood, Sullivan's last finished Opera. Thus the Society established itself as model exponents of the





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### THE GUINEAS

Newmarket, the home of the Guineas, first run in 1804, may truly be called the classic ground of racing. It is the professional man's course, and until comparatively recently, was devoid of the inevitable trimmings of other great race courses. There was no grand stand, no crowd, no booth or side show and no fixed winning post, the distance to be run in any race being determined by the Judge's Chair being wheeled about from point to point on the course. Newmarket's celebrity was established by James I. Later, according to a persistent legend, horses which had been cast up on the coast of Galloway from the wreck of the Spanish Armada were brought to Newmarket where their swiftness was favourably noticed. After a decline in popularity Newmarket again blossomed in the time of Charles II since when it has never lost its place. In 1750 Newmarket was the birth place of the famous Jockey Club, which later was to infuse some law and order into the appallingly lax standards of that time. Many of its earlier innovations are still with us; parading in the paddock, the number board with the names and numbers of the jockeys, and the banning of the use of drugs.

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Savoy tradition. No expense has ever been spared in scenery or dressing in any of its productions and expert producers have always been engaged to assist in the stage management. The Society has built up a reputation which many a professional company might envy. Floreat!

The first real sign of the revival of Grand Opera appeared in 1928 when Maestro Adelio Viani, Senior Professor of Singing at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, founded The Dublin Operatic Society. The new Society made a determined effort to present Grand Opera in a worthy manner. It made its *début* with *The Barber of Seville*, following this with operas

by Bellini and Donizetti. In 1931 was added *Cavalleria Rusticana* and, for the first time in Ireland, Puccini's remarkable Comic Opera, *Gianni Schicchi*. Signor Viani resigned in 1936. In its short life this amateur Society gave some excellent performances, and built up an important repertoire: much credit is due for what was achieved during an extremely difficult period.

Founded in 1941, the Dublin Grand Opera Society has given two seasons annually for the past twenty-one years. Below the story of the progress made by this Society is told by Lieut-Col. William O'Kelly, Cav. Uff., Chairman of the D.G.O.S. and one of the founders.

---

# THE D.G.O.S. TAKES OVER

by

LIEUT.-COL. CAV. UFF. WILLIAM O'KELLY  
*Chairman*



On the 20th of February 1941 a Meeting of those interested in a season of Opera at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, was held in the Central Hotel, Exchequer Street, Dublin. It was a most enthusiastic gathering and it was agreed to form a Society and that its title should be the "Dublin Grand Opera Society". A week of Opera was arranged to take place at the Gaiety in May 1941.

1962 marks the 21st year of the Society and it can be said that the Society has reached a position in the cultural life of Dublin far beyond the dreams of the most optimistic foundation member.

On its foundation the members found themselves without Rehearsal rooms, costumes, or funds. During these early months it was hard work and it was confidence in the future of the Society that kept us going.

Our first rehearsal rooms were at the Theatre Royal, which were made available to the Society by Mr. Louis Elliman.

The programme for our first season was: *Il Trovatore*, *La Bohème* and *La Traviata*. Raynes of London provided the costumes. The first set of costumes went

down in a cargo steamer sunk in the Irish Sea five weeks before the opening of that season, and a second set of costumes arrived in Dublin just in time for the first performance.

1941 found Europe involved in a world war and travel between Ireland and Great Britain was restricted and our principal artistes were based in Ireland. They included: James Johnston, John Torney, John Lynskey, Robert Irwin, J. C. Browner, Renee Flynn, May Devitt, Patricia Black, Eily Murnaghan, Sam Mooney, Dick Mason, Jack Harte and others.

The members of the Orchestra were engaged individually and they were drawn from the Radio Eireann Orchestra and the Army School of Music; each season this presented many difficulties which increased with the years.



# MAESTRI AND ARTISTES

*who have appeared since 1951 in the Official Festivals of Italian Opera organised by Maestro Cardenio Botti  
on behalf of the Dublin Grand Opera Society (in association with Radio Eireann).*

## SOPRANI :

Elisabetta Barbato  
Ines Bardini  
Silvana Bazzoni  
Aureliana Beltrami  
Maria Caniglia  
Maria Curtis  
Simona Dall'Argine  
Maria Dalla Spezia  
Gianna D'Angelo  
Gloria Davy  
Nora De Rosa  
Ofelia Di Marco  
Veronica Dunne  
Maria Erato  
Rina Gigli  
Ornella Jachetti  
Miki Koiwai  
Luisa Malagrida  
Caterina Mancini  
Luisa Maragliano  
Mafalda Micheluzzi  
Anna Moffo  
Renata Ongaro  
Franca Ottaviani  
Claudia Parada  
Antonietta Pastori  
Marisa Pintus  
Dodi Protero  
Margherita Rinaldi  
Elena Rizzieri  
Licia Rossini  
Elena Todeschi  
Gabriella Tucci  
Lucilla Udovich  
Virginia Zeani  
Valeria Mariconda  
Ivana Tosini  
Edy Amedeo

## MEZZOSOPRANI :

Giannella Borelli  
Rina Corsi  
Lucia Danieli  
Valeria Escalar  
Bernadette Greevy  
Licia Maragno  
Paola Mantovani  
Lari Scipioni  
Ebe Stignani  
Maria Tassi  
Palmira Vitali-Marini

★

## TENORI

Antonio Annaloro  
Fernando Bandera  
Ruggero Bondino  
Umberto Borsò  
Ferrando Ferrari  
Antonio Galie  
Salvatore Gioia  
Umberto Grilli  
Ermanno Lorenzi  
Angelo Marchiandi  
Alvinio Misciano  
Gianni Raimondi  
Regolo Romani  
Enzo Tei  
Primo Zambruno  
Giuseppe Zampieri

★

## AUTORI-DIRETTORI :

(Composers)

Salvatore Allegra  
Licinio Refice

## BARITONI :

Rodolfo Azzolini  
Otello Bersellini  
Piero Cappuccilli  
Scipio Colombo  
Attilio D'Orazi  
Giulio Fioravanti  
Giuseppe Forgione  
Tito Gobbi  
Gian Giacomo Guelfi  
Piero Guelfi  
Giulio Mastrangelo  
Carlo Meliciani  
Afro Poli  
Aldo Protti  
Renzo Scorsoni  
Paolo Silveri  
Enzo Sordello  
Carlo Tagliabue

★

## BASSI :

Plinio Clabassi  
Lorenzo Gaetani  
Loris Gambelli  
Ferruccio Mazzoli  
Leo Pudis  
Marco Stefanoni

★

## REGISTI (Producers)

Carlo Acly Azzolini  
Enrico Frigerio  
Bruno Nofri  
Elisabetta Woehr

★

## MAESTRI DIRETTORI :

Napoleone Annovazzi  
Alberto Erede  
Francesco Mander  
Giuseppe Morelli  
Giuseppe Caravaglios Patané  
Franco Patané  
Ottavio Ziino



On the completion of the first season in Dublin the Society was invited to present a season in the Savoy Theatre, Limerick, which we did with great success.

In Dublin and Limerick we played to capacity audiences and this did much to give the members confidence in the future of the Society.

Since its foundation the Society has presented two seasons each year at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin.

In 1942 we undertook a season of Opera at the Opera House, Cork, and we have returned to both Limerick and Cork since. In 1946 we presented a season of Opera in The Hippodrome, Belfast. Early in this season we were requested to stage an extra performance to be attended by troops who had just returned from Europe; we agreed to this and a mid-night performance was arranged. On the conclusion of the evening performance of *La Traviata* the audience left and the theatre was filled again by the troops for a performance of Gounod's *Faust* which was very well received. It began to look like "Round the Clock" performances with matinees, evening and midnight performances.

On the conclusion of the War it became easier to visit Great Britain and Europe and it became possible for Professional Companies to come to Dublin. The management of the Society decided that the time had arrived for an all out effort to improve the artistic standard of the Society's productions if we were to survive this new challenge.

Our financial position presented the main obstacle to raising the artistic standard, and it was decided on the suggestion of Mr. Charles E. McConnell, a great friend of the Society over the years, to form a Patron's Membership and this has been an outstanding success. It has enabled the Society to present the lesser known works without incurring a great financial risk.

In the post war years most of the leading British artistes were included in the Society's productions. The next step forward was the agreement with the Radio Eireann authorities that all the Society's presentations would be in association with Radio Eireann, this made the members of the Symphony Orchestra available for all performances. It brought about a spectacular improvement in the standard of performance and made it possible for the Society to present the principals of the Paris Opera under the baton of Roger De Sormiere in De Bussy's *Peleas et Melesanoe*—The Hamburg State Opera, The Munich State Opera. These groups included some of the world's greatest conductors and singers.

In 1950 officers of the Society visited Italy to explore the possibility of an Italian season of Opera in Dublin. This visit was undertaken on the suggestion of Prince Luigi di Giovanni, first Secretary to the then Italian Legation in Dublin, and a good friend of the Society then and now. Our visit was an outstanding success, we went there not knowing whom we were to meet. Before returning to Dublin we had the first Italian season of Opera arranged, thanks to the great assistance that we received from a man whom we met for the first time in Milan and who has since done so much for the furtherance of Italian Opera in Dublin: I refer, of course, to Maestro Cardenio Botti. Thanks largely to his experience and help it has been possible to present each year The Dublin Festival of Italian Opera.

Over the years the Society has travelled a hard road and the many difficulties have been largely overcome by the determination and hard work of the officers and members and the performing members in particular. In 21 years the Society has presented 59 different works and these have been sung in English, French, German and Italian. This entails sacrifice of time and money on their part without which it would not be possible to continue.

The Governments of Italy, Germany and France grant a subsidy to their groups appearing with us; this makes it possible for the Society to engage artistes of International standing for its Productions. Bord Failte Eireann and The Arts Council lessen also the financial risk by generous guarantees against loss each year.

In 1959 the Society received a guarantee against loss from eight prominent Dublin firms and citizens. It is pleasing to note that this list has grown to 52 in this our 21st year.

We reach our 21st year with the Society having succeeded in giving Dublin a much higher standard of opera than that which obtained when it was formed in 1941. This has been brought about by hard work and sacrifice on the part of the Performing and Production members past and present who have made it possible artistically.

By the generous gestures of the various governments, Bord Failte Eireann, The Arts Council, Our Patron Members, and our Guarantors who have made it possible financially.

We are proud of our achievement and we pass this milestone on the journey towards perfection in the knowledge that we have helped Dublin to take its place in the world of Opera.



# first production

DUBLIN GRAND OPERA SOCIETY was formed at a meeting held in the Central Hotel, Exchequer Street, Dublin, on Thursday, 20th February, 1941. The first season of Opera opened at the Gaiety Theatre on Monday, 19th May, 1941; the programme presented was *La Traviata* (Verdi), *Il Trovatore* (Verdi), *La Boheme* (Puccini).

## La Traviata

### CAST

<i>Violetta :</i>	May Devitt
<i>Alfred :</i>	James Johnston
<i>Germont :</i>	Robert Irwin
<i>Baron :</i>	N. J. Lewis
<i>Marquis :</i>	Ben Ennis
<i>Doctor :</i>	Sam Mooney
<i>Flora :</i>	Marjorie Barry
<i>Gaston :</i>	Christopher Byrom
<i>Anina :</i>	Carmel McAsey
<i>Joseph :</i>	Jack Sheridan

## Il Trovatore

### CAST

<i>Manrico :</i>	John Torney
<i>Count di Luna :</i>	John Lynskey
<i>Leonora :</i>	Moirá Griffith
<i>Azecuna :</i>	Patricia Black
<i>Ferrando :</i>	Sam Mooney
<i>Ruiz :</i>	Harry Sherdian
<i>Inez :</i>	Elieen Waldron

## La Boheme

### CAST

<i>Mimi :</i>	May Devitt
<i>Musetta :</i>	Eily Murnaghan
<i>Rudolph :</i>	John Torney
<i>Marcel :</i>	John Lynskey
<i>Schaunard :</i>	Sam Mooney
<i>Colline :</i>	N. J. Lewis
<i>Benoit :</i>	Stephen Black
<i>Alcindora :</i>	
<i>Customs Sergt. :</i>	

<i>Producer :</i>	John Lynskey
<i>Conductor :</i>	Capt. J. M. Doyle (Now Col. J. M. Doyle)
<i>Leader of Orchestra :</i>	Miss Terry O'Connor





**DUBLIN GRAND OPERA SOCIETY**

*in association with*

**RADIO EIREANN**

# **Eighth Festival of Italian Opera**

23rd APRIL to 19th MAY, 1962

**IL TROVATORE**

*(Verdi)*

**LA BOHEME**

*(Puccini)*

**LA TRAVIATA**

*(Verdi)*

**GIANNI SCHICCHI**

*(Puccini)*

**SUOR ANGELICA**

*(Puccini)*

**MEDICO SUO MALGRADO**

*(Allegra)*

**LUCIA di LAMMERMOOR**

*(Donizetti)*

**NABUCCO**

*(Verdi)*

## **ARTISTES :**

Edy Amedeo, Lucia Danieli, Paola Mantovani, Luisa Maragliano, Valerie Mariconda, Luciana Palombi, Margherita Rinaldi, Anna di Stasio, Ivana Tosini, Umberto Borso, Piero Cappuccilli, Plinio Clabassi, Scipio Colombo, Edwin Fitzgibbon, Loris Gambelli, Giorgio Giorgetti, Umberto Grilli, Gian Giacomo Guelfi, Angelo Marchiandi, Ferruccio Mazzoli, Giorgio Onesti, Enzo Sordello, Ernesto Vezzosi.

## **CONDUCTORS :**

**NAPOLEONE ANNOVAZZI**

**OTTAVIO ZIINO**

## **PRODUCER :**

**ENRICO FRIGERIO**

## **CHORUS MASTER :**

**RICCARDO BOTTINO**

**CHORUS OF DUBLIN GRAND OPERA SOCIETY**

**RADIO EIREANN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**OFFICIAL OPENING NIGHT — EASTER MONDAY, 23rd APRIL, 1962**

**GALA NIGHT — MONDAY, 14th MAY, 1962.**

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are those whose efforts  
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are supplying the  
power to help mankind.

Among these leading  
organisations whose  
efforts have richly  
benefitted our world is





# IL TROVATORE

"IL TROVATORE", opera in four Acts, was first performed in January, 1853, at the Apollo Theatre, Rome.

The complicated and sometimes improbable libretto was drawn by Cammarano from the Gutierrez drama of the same name.

Despite its 109 years the work remains firmly in the Italian repertoire of the world's lyric stages. Special performances of "Trovatore", conducted and produced by Herbert Von Karajan, are to be given at this year's Salzburg Festival in the select company of the operas of Mozart and Gluck.

## THE STORY OF THE OPERA

(Reproduced by kind permission of E.M.I. Records Limited)

### ACT I

*Scene I.* A hall in the Aliaferia palace.

When the opera begins Ferrando is telling how, years before, a gypsy was discovered at dead of night watching the sleeping infant son of the Count of Luna. Seized and burnt as a witch, in her death agony she called on her daughter, Azucena, to revenge her. Already Azucena had stolen the child with the intention of casting it into the flames which has consumed her mother. But she is overcome by her emotions and on recovering finds to her horror that it was her own child that she had killed. She had gone away with the Count's son, Manrico, who is ignorant of the circumstances of his birth. He is now grown to manhood and is a troubadour. Meanwhile, the Count of Luna has died and a second son has succeeded to the title. Both the young Count and Manrico love Leonore. She loves Manrico, whom she has only seen once, though she recognises as his the voice of a troubadour who often serenades her. Hearing him sing one night she descends into the garden (*Scene 2*). Consumed with passion, the Count has chosen that moment to visit her, and Leonore mistakes his shrouded figure for that of her lover. The Count is startled to hear Manrico's voice denouncing Leonora as faithless. They fight, and Manrico escapes badly wounded.

### ACT II

*Scene I.* The slopes of a mountain in Biscay.

A great fire is burning. The gipsy bands sing the Anvil Chorus. Manrico is almost recovered and is lying

on a couch near Azucena. Azucena repeats to them the fate of her mother and of the tragic end of her infant son. She urges Manrico to kill the Count and reproaches him for not having done so when they had met in combat. A messenger arrives with the news that the Prince has entrusted the defence of Castellor to Manrico. The same night Leonora is to take the veil, convinced that Manrico is dead. Ignoring Azucena's entreaties Manrico hurries away.

The hour has arrived for Leonora to take the vow and as the chanting of the nuns is heard within the convent, outside the Count and his followers lie in wait to abduct Leonora (*Scene 2*). At the last moment Manrico arrives and rescues her.

### ACT III

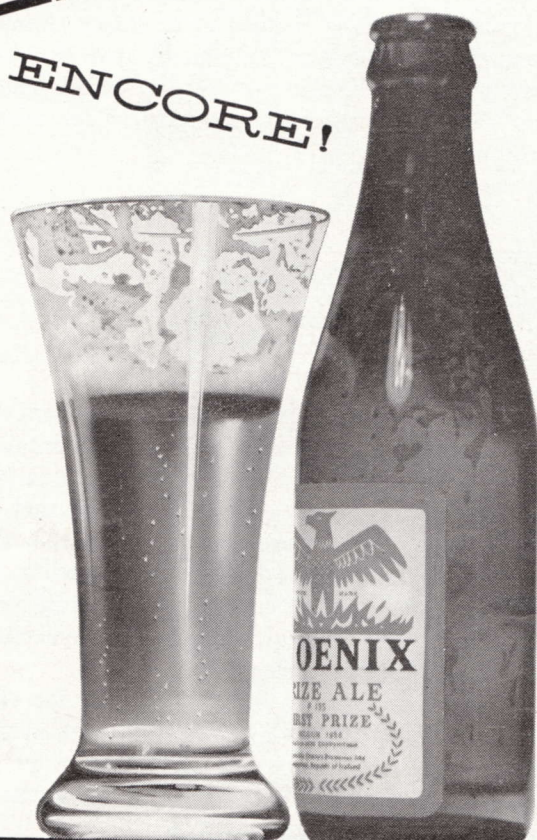
The Count of Luna's camp before the walls of Castellor, to which the Count is laying siege to revenge himself on Manrico. The soldiers are heard singing and later Ferrando arrives with the news that a gypsy woman has been caught prowling near the camp. The Count questions her and he becomes aware that she was involved in the disappearance of his brother. He signs to the guards to take her away.

Safe within the massive walls of Castellor (*Scene 2*), Leonora and Manrico are preparing to celebrate their wedding when news reaches them of the capture of Azucena. Without delay Manrico leads a sortie. He is captured and thrown into the same cell as Azucena.

*Twenty-Five*



ENCORE!  
ENCORE!  
ENCORE!



  
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#### ACT IV

Outside the tower in which her lover is confined Leonora wanders disconsolately, while the solemn sounds of the *Miserere* mingle with her laments. Manrico's voice is heard bidding her farewell. The Count appears and gloats over his victims and in a last attempt to save Manrico, Leonora offers herself as the price of his freedom. The Count agrees but while he is away Leonora sucks poison from her ring.

Manrico curses her, not knowing that she has promised herself to win his freedom (*Scene 2*). Only as she is dying does the truth dawn on him. The Count enters; furious at the deception he orders Manrico's immediate execution. Azucena, who has been in a stupor, rouses herself. The Count drags her to the window to witness the execution. "You have slain your brother!" she cries, "Mother, you are avenged!"

L. S.

#### MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS

##### ACT I

##### SCENE 1

Ferrando's (Bass) Narration (with Chorus) "*All' erta!*"

##### SCENE 2

Soprano Aria — "*Tacea la notte placida*".

Trio and Stretto Soprano, Tenor and Baritone — "*Di geloso amor*".

##### ACT II

##### SCENE 1

Anvil Chorus.

Azucena's (Mezzosoprano) Narration—"*Stride le vampa*".

Duet Mezzosoprano and Tenor — "*Condotta ell'era in ceppi*".

##### SCENE 2

Baritone Aria — "*Il balen del suo sorriso*" (Tempest of the Heart).

##### ACT III

##### SCENE 1

Soldiers' Chorus.

##### SCENE 2

Tenor Aria — "*Ah, si ben mio*" and Cabaletta— "*Di quella pira*".

##### ACT IV

##### SCENE 1

Soprano Aria — "*D'amor sull'ali rosee*"; "*The Miserere Scene*" — Chorus, Soprano and Tenor.

Duet Soprano and Baritone — "*Qual voce*".

##### SCENE 2

Duet Mezzosoprano and Tenor "*Ai nostri monti*".  
Final Trio, Soprano, Mezzosoprano, and Tenor.



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## Conductors

### NAPOLEONE ANNOVAZZI

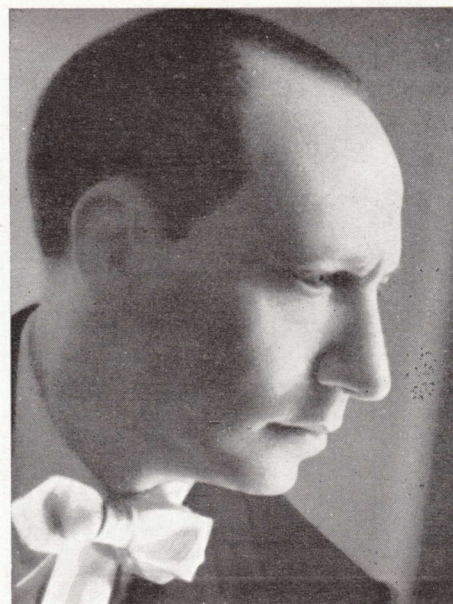
(Conductor) though born a Florentine completed his musical studies at Venice and began his conducting career at Riga in 1935. Combining work in the fields of symphonic and opera music, he has conducted the Santa Cecilia, Vienna Symphony, Munich Philharmonic Orchestras and the orchestras of Lisbon and Madrid, and in the field of Opera, in almost all the more important opera houses of Europe, in the State Operas of Vienna, Cologne, Wiesbaden and Munich and in Lisbon, Barcelona, Naples, Rome, as well as at Caracalla. In America he has directed opera at Havana, Mexico and the City Centre, New York.

This is his second visit to Dublin.



### OTTAVIO ZIINO

(Composer and Conductor). He studied composition with Antonio Savasta at the Conservatoire of Palermo, his native town. At the same time he studied law at the University of Palermo. After this he followed courses in conducting and composition at the S. Cecilia Academy in Rome under Bernardino Molinari, and Ildebrando Pizzetti. He then dedicated himself to conducting, both in the theatrical field (Rome Opera House, San Carlo, Naples, Carlo Felice Theatre, Genoa, Reggio Theatre, Parma, Bellini Theatre, Catania, Grande Theatre, Brescia, Massimo Theatre in Cagliari etc.) and in the symphonic field as well, conducting concerts in the most important institutes of Italy (National Academy of S. Cecilia in Rome, Maggio Musicale, Florence, Società Scarlatti, Naples, Venice Festival, RAI-Radio Italiana, Massimo Palermo). He had been active abroad in both operatic and symphonic fields (France, S. America, Germany, Scandinavia, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Holland, Australia and Luxembourg). He is now the resident Director of the Symphonic Orchestra of Sicily. He has recently proved himself as a composer also.





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# *Festival Impresario*

## **CARDENIO BOTTI**

(Manager). Maestro Botti's many activities, conductor, composer and man of theatre, are well known in Italy where he has supervised the direction of many of the principal opera houses. He completed his studies at the St. Cecilia Conservatoire in Rome. At the Royal Opera House in Malta he was first conductor for the operas and symphony concerts, and subsequently General Manager. He conducted the St. Cecilia Orchestra in Rome at various concerts in the well known Augusteo Hall. He was subsequently appointed Director of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and later of the Carlo Felice in Genoa. He has been an adjudicator at numerous contests for singers and composers and has been Director of the Organisation for the co-ordination of the great Opera Houses, controlled by the State. For nine years he has organised the visiting Italian Opera Company for the D.G.O.S. and the benefit of his long experience has considerably aided the success of the Italian Opera Festivals in Dublin.



## *Producer*



## **ENRICO FRIGERIO**

(Producer) was born at Castello di Lecce. After graduating in Law at Milan University he turned to the study of musical composition at the Scuola di Musica of Milan under Paul Kletski. Although he has to his credit several musical compositions which have received public performance, he decided on the role of opera producer (regista) as a career, which he embarked on in 1938. Over the years he has produced some 150 operas in the more important theatres of Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain and in both North and South America. Among the highlights of his productions were Rossini's "TANCREDI" (Florence Festival 1951); Verdi's "GIOVANNA D'ARCO" at the San Carlo of Naples and in Paris in the Verdi Anniversary Celebrations 1951; the first performance in Italy, again at the San Carlo, of Prokofiev's "IL GIOCATORE" (1953) and Berlioz' "DAMNATION DE FAUST" at the Florence Festival 1954.

FRIGERIO has also been the producer of a number of film documentaries. It is his first visit to Dublin.



---

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## *Costumes:*

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VINO of ROME.

## *Wigs:*

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PALERMO.

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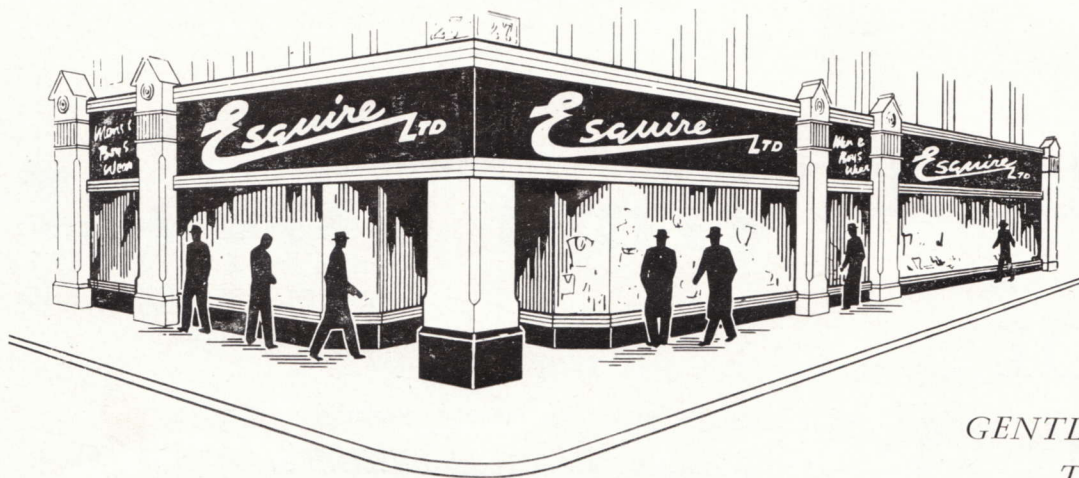
All the productions of this Festival have been arranged with the collaboration of Maestro Cardenio BOTTI, Director of O.P.E.R.A. (Organizzazione per la Propaganda all'Esterio di Rappresentazione Artistiche), ROME.

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*Stage Manager:*  
PATRICK MacCLELLAN

*Stage Lighting:*  
CHARLES MORRISON





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## **RICCARDO BOTTINO**

(Chorus Master). After studying pianoforte, and composition and orchestral and choral conducting under Schinelli, Bossi and Pedrollo at Parma, Maestro Bottino graduated at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi, Milan. He began his career as an orchestra director and conducted in the major theatres in Italy, besides undertaking extended tours of France, Switzerland, Germany and England. Recently, however, he has devoted himself exclusively to choral conducting in which he has specialized, having acted as chorus master in important official opera seasons in Italy and abroad. He arrived in Dublin direct from the Teatro Liceo of Barcelona where he was chorus master for all operas throughout the four months international opera season there.



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### EDY AMEDEO

(Soprano). Studied in Turin, her native city. After success in the Spoleto contest she made her début three years ago in the annual experimental opera season there. In the Italian theatres she has won special recognition for her interpretations of the Puccini roles of *Mimi*, *Butterfly* and *Suor Angelica* for which her special gifts of voice and personality are peculiarly adapted.

### LUCIA DANIELI

(Mezzosoprano) was born in Vicenza, near Venice. After winning a national singing contest sponsored by the Teatro Comunale of Florence, she spent two years in a "corso di perfezionamento" in the school attached to the Comunale. Following her début at Spoleto, Lucia Danieli soon built up a reputation for her interpretation of the great mezzo roles of Verdi (*Amuerio*, *Azucena*, *Preziosilla*, etc.) which she sung many times at the Teatro dell' Opera, Rome, the Scala of Milan, the Comunale, Florence, and other musical centres. Her musical activities extend also to the concert field of the Italian Radio and the Academy of Santa Cecilia. Daniele, who will sing *Azucena* in *Il Trovatore*, is making her first visit to Dublin.



### PAOLA MANTOVANI

(Mezzosoprano). Since this young mezzosoprano made her début in 1956 at the Teatro Nuovo of Milan, she has been building up a solid reputation in the theatres of Italy and abroad. Besides successful performances at the San Carlo, Naples, she has sung at important theatres in France, Germany, Switzerland and South America. This is her first visit to Dublin, where she will appear as Fenena in *Nabucco* and La Principessa in *Suor Angelica*.



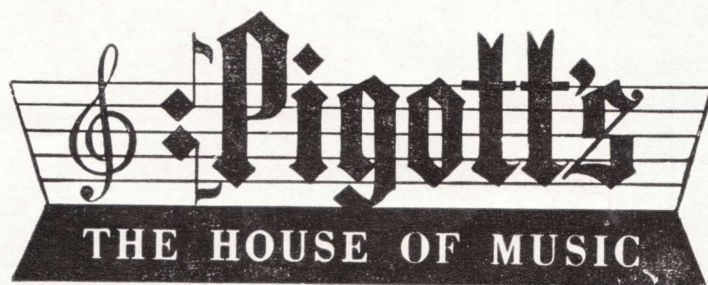
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### LUISA MARAGLIANO

(Soprano). Was born and studied in Genoa. After her début in Switzerland as *Mimi* her extraordinary qualities as a dramatic soprano and as a Verdi soprano in particular were soon revealed. She comes to Dublin to sing the very exacting rôle of Abigaille in *Nabucco*. In the few brilliant years of this young soprano's career she has appeared in many of the greater opera houses—to mention but a few—Covent Garden, the State Operas of Berlin and Dresden, at the Arena at Verona as well as in the theatres of Bologna, Parma, Genoa, Bergamo and Catania.

### VALERIA MARICONDA

(Soprano). This young soprano was born in Tuscany and studied in Florence. In a very short time her voice, style and musicianship have brought her much success and point to a great international career in the future. She comes to Dublin for the first time to sing Musetta in *La Bohème* and Sister Genoveffa in *Suor Angelica*.



### LUCIANA PALOMBI

(Soprano). Completed her musical studies in Rome, specialising in the secondary rôles of the Italian repertoire. She has sung in many theatres with such famous artists as Maria Caniglia, Anita Cerquetti, Tagliavini, Protti, Borso and others.





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#### **ANNA DI STASIO**

(Mezzosoprano). Studied in Rome. This intelligent and versatile artist is well-known throughout Italy for her fine voice and the exceptional musicianship which enable her to undertake a very wide range of mezzo roles. Most of the important theatres of Italy have engaged her and she has also taken part in opera tournées in England, Scandinavia and Japan.



#### **MARGHERITA RINALDI**

(Soprano). Studied in Milan and perfected her style at the school of the famous artist Ines Adami Corradetti. Was discovered at the Spoleto competition where she won first prize. In the Teatro Sperimentale there, which is under the same direction as the Opera of Rome, she made her début in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, obtaining great praise from public and press. She was immediately called to La Scala. In recent years she has been engaged mostly at the Teatro dell' Opera, Rome.



#### **IVANA TOSINI**

(Soprano). After a long period of severe study, now ranks with the elect of the *bel canto* school. She has made her Scala début and has sung in leading theatres in Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia and North Africa. At the Albert Hall, London, she attained great success in the soprano rôle in Verdi's *Requiem*. She comes to Dublin for the first time to sing Violetta in *La Traviata*.



The background of the entire advertisement is a black and white musical score. It features multiple staves with various musical notes, including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and beams. The score is written in a classic, slightly stylized font. The word 'HARMONY' is superimposed over the center of the page, with the letters in a large, bold, serif font. The letters are white with a black outline, making them stand out against the dark background of the musical score.

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## UMBERTO BORSÒ

(Tenor). Made his début at the Teatro Sperimentale of Spoleto in *La Forza del Destino*. He soon passed to L'Opera, Rome, then to La Fenice, Venice, to the Verdi, Trieste, the Massimo, Palermo, and to all the best-known Italian opera houses. He took part in an opera tournée in Australia and New Zealand, and in opera festivals in Egypt, Japan, Spain, and Holland. His most recent appearances have been at the opera season at Caracalla, Rome, in *William Tell* and in seasons in Spain and North America.

Borsò made his début at the Metropolitan Opera, N.Y., a few weeks ago.



## PIERO CAPPUCILLI

(Baritone). Since his début in 1956 Piero Cappuccilli has appeared in practically every Italian opera house of importance as well as at the major theatres of Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France and Germany.

He has sung the leading baritone rôles in the latest long-play recordings, with Maria Callas, of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La Gioconda* and in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Don Giovanni*, under Giulini with Sutherland, Schwartzkopf, Sciutti, Taddei, etc., and is now one of the most sought after baritones of the day.

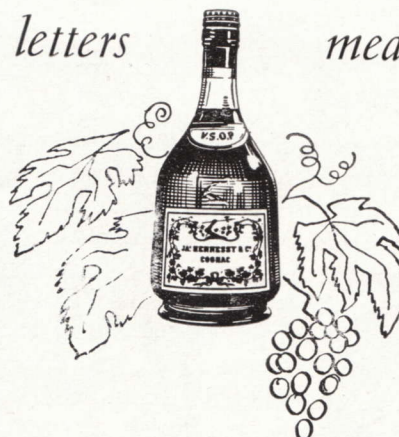




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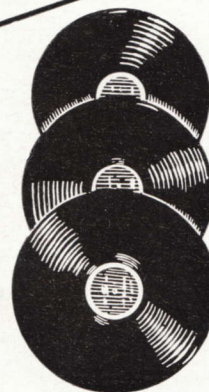
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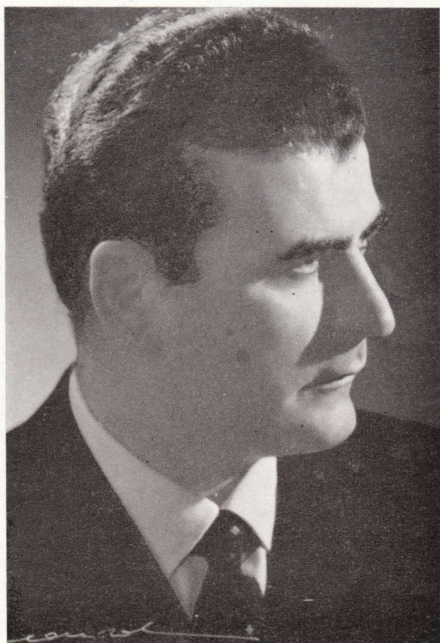
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### PLINIO CLABASSI

(Bass). Since his first appearance here in 1953, Plinio Clabassi has deservedly become most popular with Dublin audiences. In the years between his operatic activities have spread to all important Italian opera houses. He sings regularly at the Scala and at the Rome Opera and he has had great success at recent seasons in North and South America. In the 1962 Festival he returns to sing in *La Boheme* and in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



### SCIPIO COLOMBO

(Baritone) The career of this versatile artist has embraced most of the major European theatres. He comes to Dublin to interpret two roles of the highest interest — Gianni Schicchi in Puccini's opera and the "Doctor" in Allegra's *Medico suo malgrado*. His repertoire is very extensive, covering the Verdi baritone parts and ranging widely over the classical and modern repertoire. His is a name which is well known and respected in the opera theatres of Italy and Europe as well as in the concert world.



### EDWIN FITZGIBBON

(Tenor). Began studies at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Played the baritone lead Gellner in *La Wally* (Catalani) as a student there. After further study became Tenor and completed studies under Frederic Cox, Principal of Royal Manchester College of Music. Sang *Cavaradossi* in Manchester—warmly praised by *Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* critics and Pinkerton in various North of England cities as guest with a new Manchester based company. Has played operetta leads (*Merry Widow*, *Showboat*).

Is a frequent broadcaster from Radio Eireann, particularly *Concert Hall* series where he has been heard in arias from the principal Italian operatic composers—Puccini, Verdi, Giordano, Cilea, etc.

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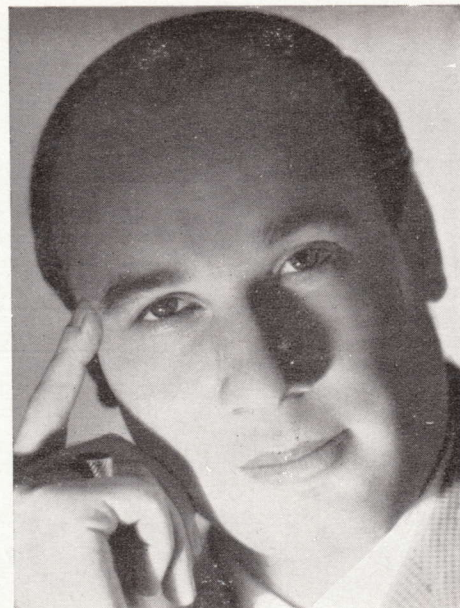
### LORIS GAMBELLI

(Bass). Was born in Rome and studied under the famous baritone Riccardo Stracciari. He won the International Singing Competition at Fabriano, and there made his début in Donizetti's *La Favorita*. He has since sung in many other Italian opera houses, including the Grande in Brescia and the Sociale in Mantova. Abroad he has taken part in the seasons in Madrid and in South America. Has been a frequent visitor to Dublin for the Italian Festivals.



### UMBERTO GRILLI

(Tenor). Was born in Lombardy and studied in Milan. In the three years since his début Grilli has pursued an increasingly successful career in the Italian theatres and in tournées in Holland and Switzerland. In Dublin he will sing the tenor roles in *La Boheme* and *La Traviata*.

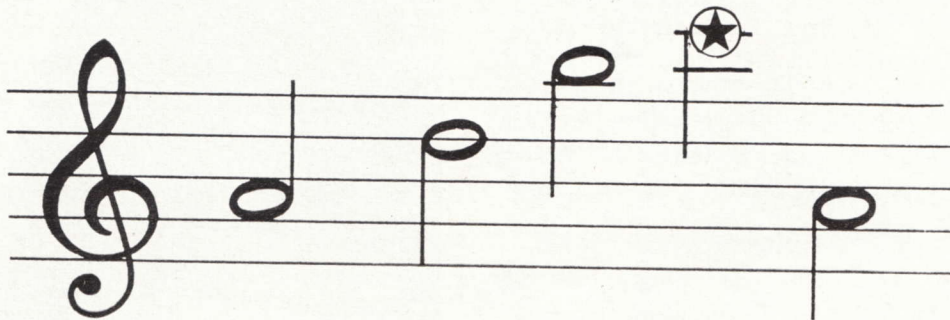


### GIORGIO GIORGETTI

(Baritone). Studied singing and acting at Florence where he made his début at the Teatro Comunale in the role of Schaunard in *La Boheme* in which he will be heard in Dublin. His name is well-known in the theatres of Italy as well as those of Germany, France, Spain and Switzerland.







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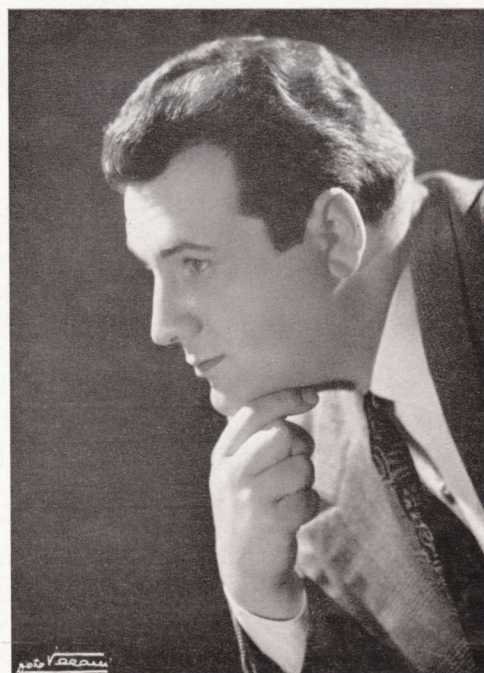
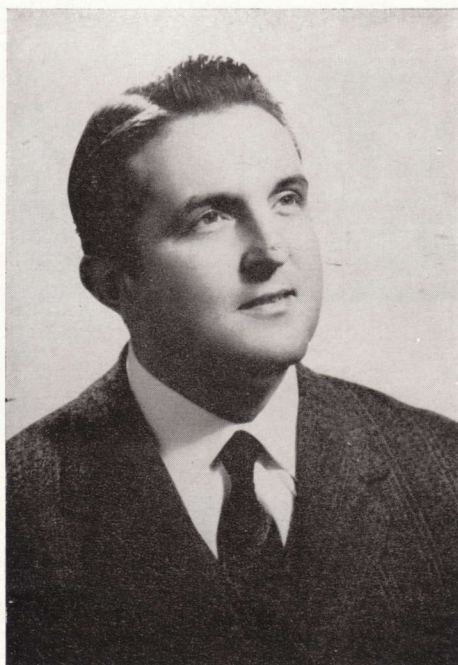
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### GIAN GIACOMO GUELFİ

(Baritone). Guełfi is also an alumnus of the Experimental Theatre of Spoleto where he made his bow in 1954. In the interval he has become one of the greatest of Italian baritones and an artist of world reputation in Europe, America and the Far East. He visits Dublin to sing the name-part in Verdi's *Nabucco* which he sustained only a short time ago at the Teatro Verdi of Trieste and will repeat next summer at the Arena of Verona.



### ANGELO MARCHIANDI

(Tenor). Born and studied in Genoa. Made his debut at the Experimental Theatre, Spoleto, revealing himself an artist with a rich voice and refined style. He soon appeared at the Rome Opera House and the San Carlo of Naples, Copenhagen and some French theatres. He made his La Scala debut in *Gianni Schicchi* during the present season at Milan.



### FERRUCCIO MAZZOLI

(Bass) completed his musical studies at the Bologna Conservatoire and subsequently appeared at the Teatro Sperimentale in Spoleto, where he was immediately noticed for his exceptional voice. After his appearance in this theatre it was not difficult for him to obtain engagements at the principal opera houses, from the Rome Opera House to San Carlo in Naples, the Massimo in Palermo, the Comunale in Bologna, and La Scala. He appeared in Dublin for the first time five years ago, singing in various operas, and immediately became a favourite with the Dublin public.





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### **GIORGIO ONESTI**

(Bass). Versatile and studious artist, particularly adapted to roles of "character," he shows an unusual ability. Has sung in many Italian and foreign theatres. He is very popular in Dublin, where he is returning for the sixth time.



### **ENZO SORDELLO**

(Baritone). He is a young artist but already he has attained international fame, having sung at the Scala, Milan, and the Metropolitan, New York, and in all the principal opera houses. The purity and spontaneity of his singing, his musicality and accuracy render him an artist of a high level. Since his last appearance in Dublin two years ago his activities have been mainly on the North American operatic scene, and at Glyndebourne.



### **ERNESTO VEZZOSI**

(Baritone). Made his début at the Teatro Reggio in Parma and then passed on to the Fenice in Venice, the Verdi in Trieste, the S. Carlo in Naples and others. Has taken part in tournées in Germany, Holland, Egypt, France, England and Ireland. One of the most versatile artists in opera.



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# LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

(Libretto by Cammarano, based on Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor." First produced in Naples in 1835.  
The setting is in Scotland about 1700.)

## ACT I

*Scene I* is a grove near the Castle of Lammermoor. Henry Ashton (Baritone), Lucy's brother, and his followers are searching for the intruder who is believed to be Lucy's unknown lover. Henry must remove all obstacles to his scheme of forcing Lucy into marriage with Lord Arthur Bucklaw through which he hopes to restore the family fortunes that were shattered in the political perils of the time. Lucy is ignorant of this scheme. Norman (Tenor) reports that the stranger is none other than Edgar, last of the Ravenswoods, between whose House and Henry's a blood feud has existed for generations. In the air *La pietade in suo favore* Henry vows to quench this secret love in Edgar's blood.

*Scene II* is the Castle park. The moonlit scene and the gentle character of Lucy herself are established by the tranquil harmonies of the solo harp to which the curtain rises. Lucy (Soprano) enters and to her companion Alice describes in the aria *Regnava nel silenzio* her meetings with Edgar at this spot. The mood of the aria is dreamy and ecstatic but some of its passages demand extreme technical brilliance. Edgar (Tenor) finally appears. He has to tell her that he must go on a distant journey but that before leaving he would wish to be reconciled with Henry as a prelude to their marriage. Lucy, however, knowing too well the harshness of her brother's nature, counsels

him to keep their love still a secret. The exciting duet concludes with an exchange of rings in pledge of betrothal.

## ACT II

Henry has sent for Lucy in furtherance of his plan to break down her resistance to the marriage he has, in fact, already arranged. Lucy sadly protests. Henry has intercepted all Edgar's letters but now he hands her one, a forgery, which persuades her that she has been deserted by Edgar for another woman. This duet (*Soffriva nel pianto*) is moving and dramatic as Henry bullyingly urges the bewildered Lucy to forget the faithless Edgar and marry Arthur. As well as saving their House from ruin she may also, he suggests, save him (Henry) from the political dangers that threaten his life. Lucy appeals to Raymond (Bass), the family chaplain. Only when he urges her to obey does Lucy broken-heartedly submit.

In the second Castle scene of this Act the opera moves towards its climax. Guests, tenants, etc., have gathered to witness the signing of the marriage contract. After the lively chorus the bridegroom (Tenor) is received. Lucy enters, seemingly frozen in her sorrow. Henry explains to Arthur that she still grieves for her mother only recently dead. In haste he presents the document to Lucy and in terror and confusion of mind she signs it. At that moment





*Lucia di Lammermoor, 2nd Act, 2nd Scene, designed by Giovanni Grandi.*

Edgar, returned from his mission, dramatically bursts in upon the scene. Shocked by what he conceives must be Lucy's treachery he reviles the fainting girl. Tension heightens into the exciting sextet led by Edgar *Chi mi frena in tal momento?*—one of the greatest concerted pieces in Italian opera. In the quarrel which ensues Raymond interposes to prevent a duel. Edgar, departing, flings Lucy's ring at her feet. There is a thrilling choral ending to the Act with Lucy's voice soaring despairingly over the rest.

### ACT III

The marriage has taken place and the festivities are in full swing. A joyous chorus is silenced by the arrival of Raymond. He tells the horrified assembly that Lucy, her reason gone, has stabbed the bridegroom to death. A transfigured almost spectral Lucy appears still grasping the dagger with which she has killed Arthur. Now begins the celebrated "Mad Scene," *Ardon gl' incensi . . . splendon le sacri faci intorno!* introduced and accompanied by solo flute. The number is an exacting test for every coloratura soprano. While the vocal writing of this showpiece

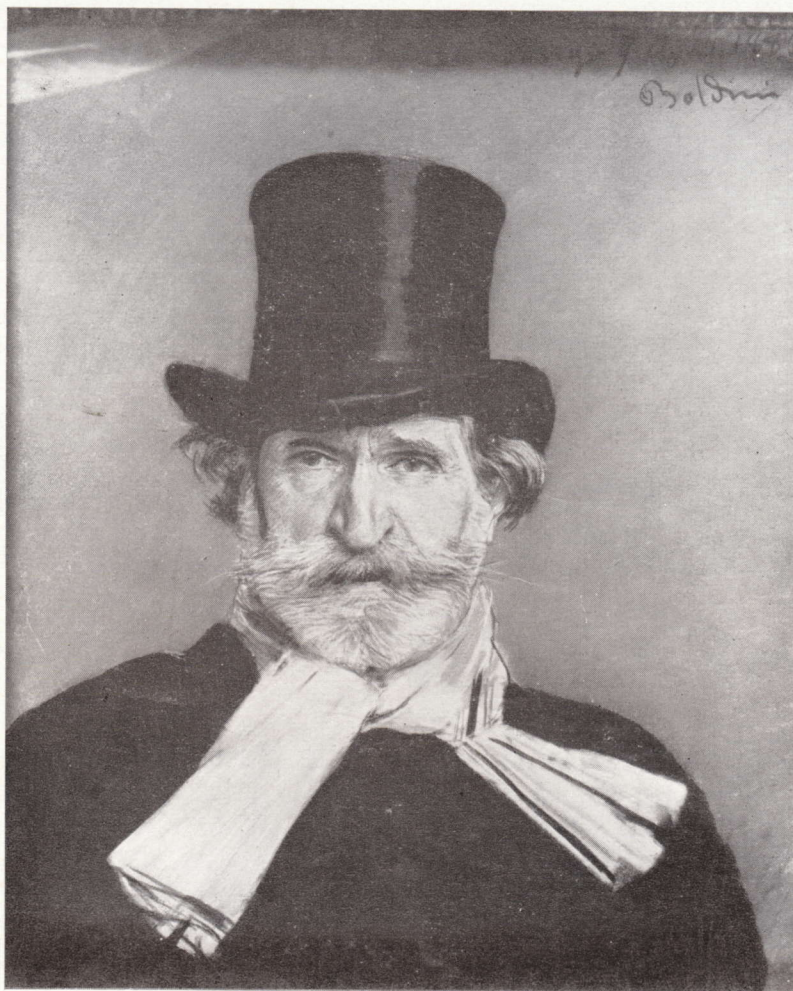
*Fifty-Four*

is extremely florid and exacting, it is not, in its general effect, entirely out of character with the dramatic situation.

In her delirium Lucy re-lives her meetings with Edgar and suffers again the terrible scene of his anger and reproaches in Act II. In her disordered mind it is to him, not Arthur, she has been united in the marriage ceremony that day. As the scene concludes Lucy falls lifeless to the ground.

For the brief finale we are transferred to a ruinous churchyard where the tombs of the Ravenswoods are discerned. Edgar, alone, tells in the aria *Tombe degli avi miei* that without Lucy life for him is vain and that he, "the last of his unhappy race," has come to this place where he will encounter Henry, his enemy, and find death in a duel with him. As a funeral bell tolls a group of mourners enters. From them he learns that the knell is for his beloved Lucy. Since Henry has already fled, Edgar resolves to end his own life himself. Despairingly he cries to the spirit of the dead girl in the final aria *Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali*. With a dagger he kills himself and so ends this tragedy of star-crossed lovers.






GIUSEPPE VERDI  
1813-1901

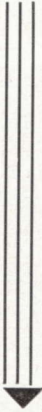
*The Story of the Opera Il Trovatore appears on Page 25.*





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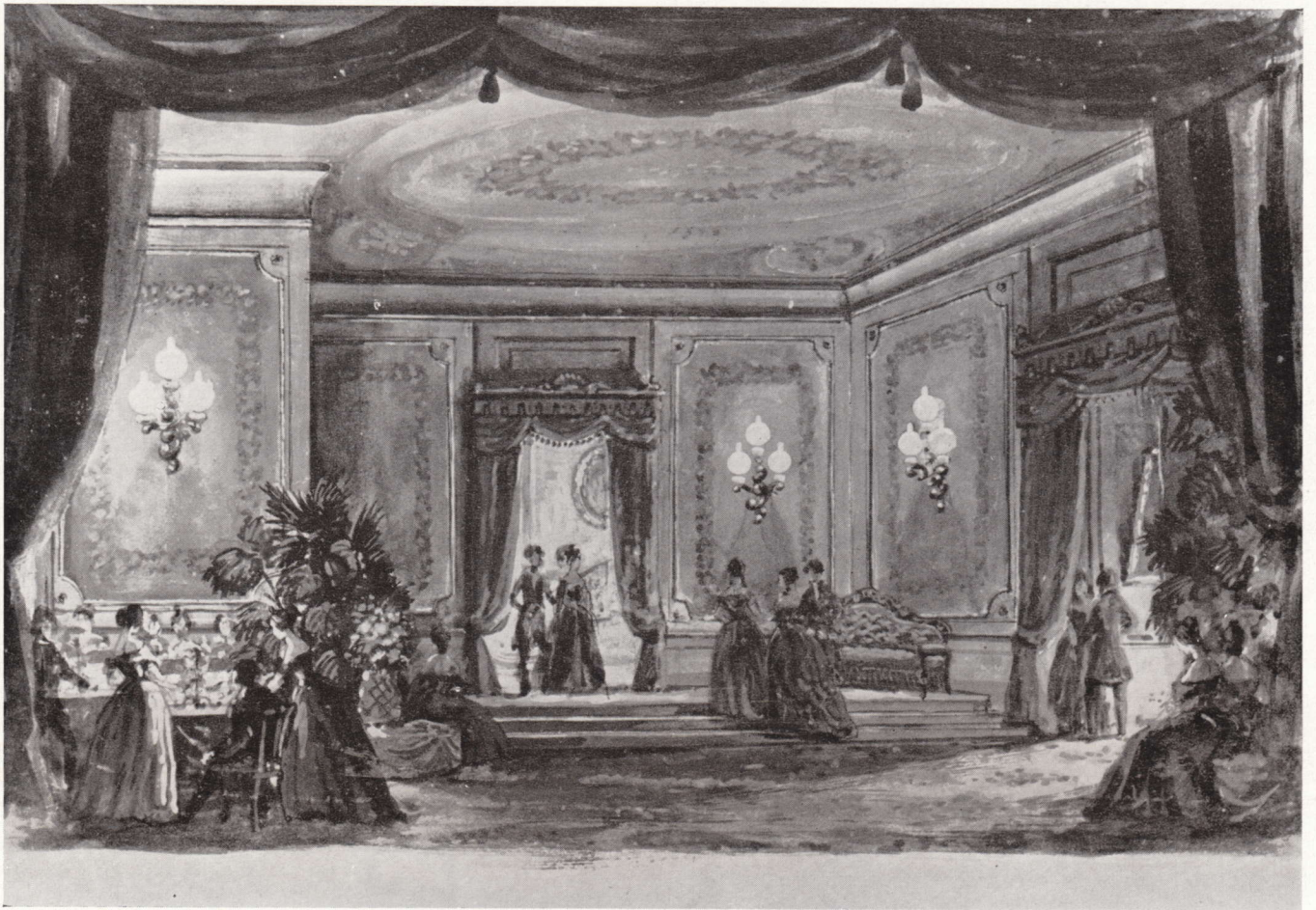
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*"La Traviata" Act III. Designed by Franco Zeffirelli*

# LA TRAVIATA

"La Traviata" forms with "Rigoletto" and "Il Trovatore" the trilogy of Verdi's great popular operas. All three were performed for the first time within the short space of two years.

Based on Dumas' "La Dame aux Camélias" which Verdi had seen played in Paris, "La Traviata" received its première on 6 March, 1853, in Venice. Despite the enormous and instant success of "Rigoletto" at the same theatre two years previously, "La Traviata" failed dismally at first to please the public. The causes of the failure were several. There were the inevitable first-night mishaps. Some of the singers were ill and the fourth Act spectacle of the soprano Salvini-Donatelli, one of the most corpulent sopranos of her time, enacting the part of a heroine who dies of consumption excited the mirth of the audience.

Then, too, the subject of the life and death of a demi-mondaine rather shocked the susceptibilities of an opera audience of the day which had already received the unaccustomed jolt of an opera in contemporary dress.

It was not long, however, before the opera achieved its due recognition and it has remained one of the best (if not *the* best) beloved of all operas.

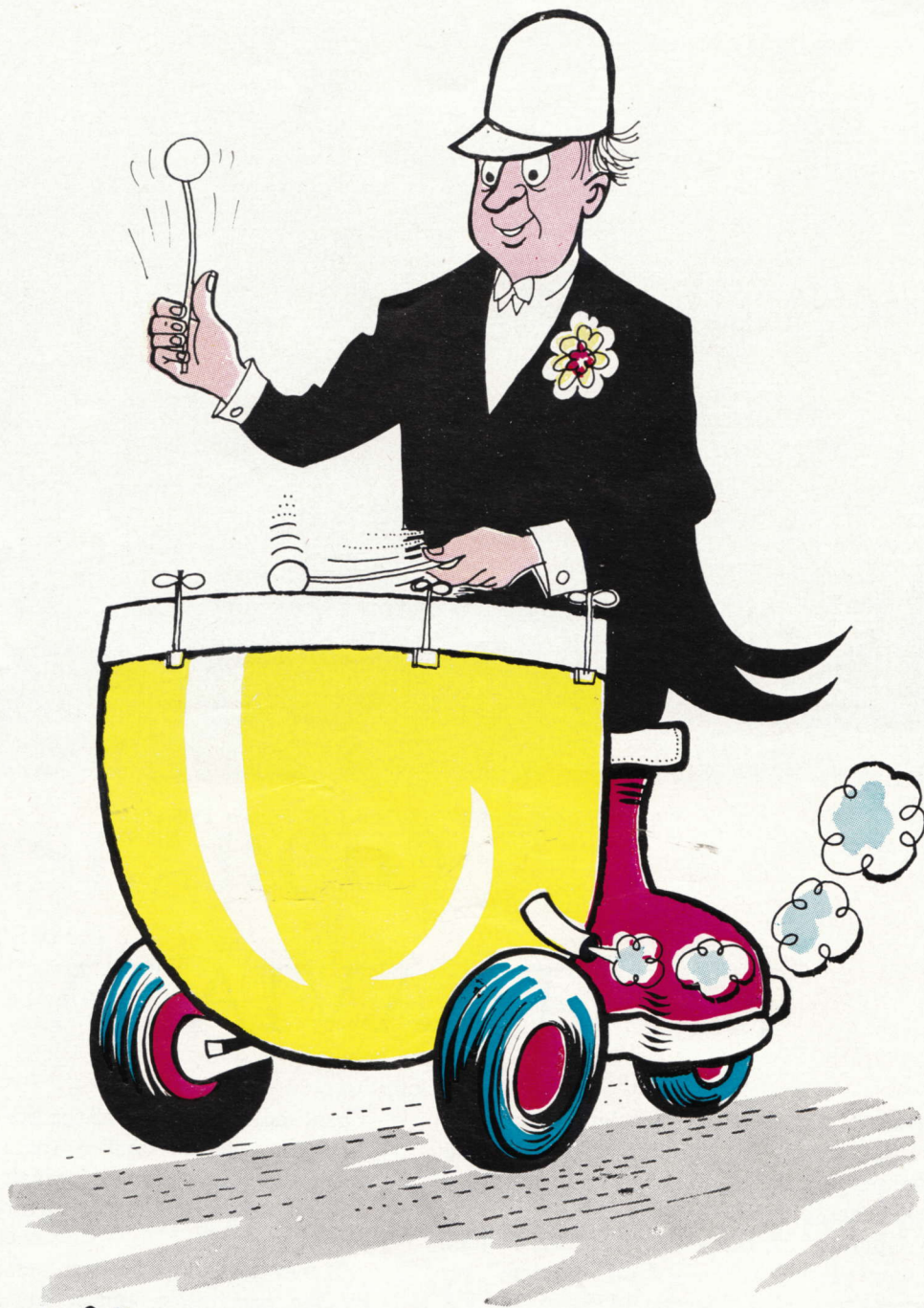
The libretto is by Piave. The events take place in Paris and are usually ascribed to the early nineteenth century.

## ACT I

In the salon of the beautiful demi-mondaine, Violetta Valéry (soprano), a party is in progress. Among the guests is Alfred Germont (tenor). He is

*Fifty-Seven*





SHELL POWERED  
WELL POWERED





introduced to Violetta by Gaston (tenor) who explains to her that for a year and more the young man has loved her from a distance. Invited by Violetta to sing a drinking song, Alfred launches into the spirited *Libiamo nei lieti calici* in praise of the gay life. As the guests are about to go dancing in another room, Violetta is stricken by a sudden faintness and a spasm of coughing—a sinister premonition of the fatal disease that already ravages her. She quickly recovers, however. As soon as they are alone, Alfred tells her of his long-felt love. (*Un di felice, eterea*). Violetta at first receives this declaration lightly and advises him that it were best to forget her. Seemingly as an after-thought when Alfred is about to leave, she gives him one of her camelias with the promise that she will meet him again “when the flower has withered”.

When all her guests have gone, Violetta's great scena, “*Ah, forse è lui*” begins. Strangely perturbed by her encounter with the young man, the brittle woman of the world wonders whether this might not be what she has never yet experienced—a serious love (*un serio amore*). With a bitter laugh she quickly dismisses these wistful thoughts. Her chosen path of frivolous dissipation must now, she knows, be followed to its end. But as towards the close of the brilliant *cabaletta*, the voice of Alfred reaches her from below her balcony we know that her resolve is already weakening and that the two are destined to meet again.

## ACT II

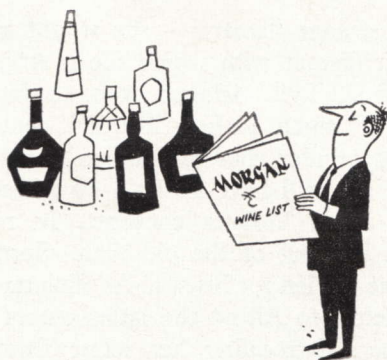
Violetta and Alfred have indeed met again and have been three months together in her secluded country house near Paris. In his aria *Dei miei bollenti spiriti* Alfred tells of their happiness in this rural haven of peace. Annina, Violetta's maid, enters. She is returning, Alfred learns, from Paris whither she had been sent to sell most of her mistress's remaining possessions in order to pay the considerable expenses of the establishment. Greatly shocked and humiliated by this unexpected information he declares he will go himself to Paris at once to raise some money. When Violetta has re-entered, a visitor is announced. It is Georges Germont (baritone), Alfred's father, come to rescue his son from, as he imagines, the toils of a mercenary female. From being nonplussed by the dignity with which Violetta meets his charge (“I am a woman, sir, and in my own house”), old Germont is further discomposed when she quickly convinces him, with proof in hand, that hers is the money, not Alfred's, which pays for all this “luxury” he has indicated. He begs her, however, to leave Alfred, pleading that while the family scandal of their association remains, the young man whom his daughter loves will not marry her. Violetta at first

rejects this strange demand—she would rather die, killed by the disease with which she is stricken, than give up Alfred. This dialogue proceeds in the form of a duet of much pathos. Finally, convinced by Germont's reminder that as soon as her youth and beauty fade she will have no hold on Alfred (“What then?” he asks), Violetta consents. In return she asks only a blessing of the old man. Germont goes to wait in the garden for his son. As Violetta is writing a farewell letter to Alfred the latter enters in search of his father. Concealing her letter from Alfred's eyes, Violetta embraces him and in the great outburst *Amami, Alfredo, quant'io t'amo... Addio!* (the climax of the opera) she declares undying love for him. She runs distractedly from the room. A servant soon enters with Violetta's letter. As Alfred reads the shattering words, Germont père re-appears. Neither his comforting words nor his appeal (*Di Provenza*) to the prodigal to return to his family can calm Alfred's frenzy. Believing that Violetta has left him to return to Paris and a former lover, the Baron Douphol, Alfred dashes off in pursuit of the runaway.

## ACT III

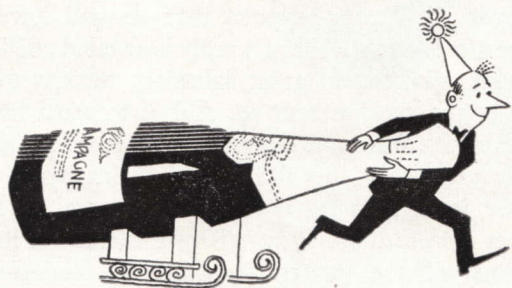
Paris. The salon in the house of Flora (mezzo-soprano), a friend of Violetta's. The guests are entertained by a ballet featuring Spanish gypsies and matadors. All Violetta's old friends are there. News of her break with Alfred has already reached Paris so that on the arrival of Alfred, who is soon followed by Violetta on the arm of Baron Douphol, the atmosphere becomes electric. Alfred sits down at a card table and, excited by his phenomenal winnings, keeps up a run of ironic comments designedly offensive to Violetta and the Baron. The latter reacts, joins the card game and loses to Alfred. As they rise to go to supper the Baron remarks that he will have his revenge after supper. Alfred's reply is a veiled challenge to a duel. Violetta, in great agitation, returns to the empty stage. She has sent for Alfred to warn him to beware of the Baron, a dangerous swordsman. Keeping her promise to his father, she maintains to him that she loves him no more and that the Baron is now her “protector”. Enraged by this, Alfred loudly summons all the guests. Pointing to Violetta, he proclaims the favours he received from her and with the brutal words *Qui testimon vi chiamo ch'ora pagato io l'ho* (“I call you all to witness that I've paid in full”) he throws his winnings at her feet. Old Germont, a witness of the shameful episode, disowns the son who insults a woman thus. The Baron challenges Alfred to a duel and all the company express their reproaches in the choral ending to the Act.





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### ACT IV

The last Act is introduced by the beautiful orchestral prelude to which the curtain rises on Violetta's bedroom. She is sick and poor, with only the faithful Annina to attend her. It is early morning and Carnival time. Dr. Grenvil visits the invalid who is not deceived by his comforting assurances of recovery. To Annina the Doctor confides that her mistress has but a few hours to live.

Left alone for a moment, Violetta re-reads a cherished letter from old Germont which tells her that after the duel, in which the Baron was wounded, Alfred had to fly the country; that he now understood the nature of Violetta's great sacrifice and was hastening back to her. "Too late!" she cries and in the very moving soliloquy *Addio del passato* she pictures her approaching end, lonely and forgotten, her beauty gone. Outside the sounds of Carnival in Paris are heard.

Alfred arrives. After their ecstatic greeting the lovers dream of beginning life anew far away from Paris (*Duet: Parigi, o cara, noi lasceremo*). In her new-found happiness Violetta for a moment imagines her health returning and desperately clutches at the possibility of living. But her brief candle of hope soon flickers down again. She rallies only to give Alfred her picture in miniature, in memory of happier times, before expiring in his arms.



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# NABUCCO

With the opening of the year 1842 Bellini was prematurely dead, Rossini had been silent for years and Donizetti was a spent force. It seemed that the music of the Italian lyric theatre had lost its inspiration and would be left to live on its past. A certain Verdi had had two operas performed in Milan (*Oberto* and *Un giorno di regno*) but they had been near disasters. No hope for the resuscitation of Italian opera appeared to lie in that direction. Discouraged by these two failures and still weighed down by his personal tragedy—the recent deaths of his wife and of both his children—Verdi had practically renounced his ambition to be a composer. His one influential friend—the impresario Merelli—still had confidence in him and finally persuaded Verdi to make an opera to a libretto by Solera on the subject of Nabuchodonosor.

*NABUCCO* was accepted by the Scala and at its first performance there on 9th March, 1842 (with the great soprano, and Verdi's future wife, Giuseppina Strepponi, in the title role), a splendid new genius of Italian opera was revealed. *Nabucco* was received by public, press and musicians alike with the wildest enthusiasm which was aroused as much by its musical value as for the "actuality" of its theme. During those years leading up to the Risorgimento, Italy was living in a state of political unrest. In *Nabucco*, with its background of the Babylonian Captivity, the renascent Italy discerned a symbol of her own longing for national liberation and unification.

Whenever *Nabucco* was performed—and its fame spread rapidly throughout Italy—the nostalgic third act chorus of the exiled Jews on the banks of the Euphrates excited demonstration of patriotic fervour.

## ACT I

Jerusalem, inside the Temple of Solomon. Jews and Levites are gathered there in lamentation awaiting the incursion of Nabucco (Nabuchodonosor) whose Assyrian armies have overrun the kingdom, Judea. The High Priest of the Jews, Zaccaria, exhorts them to courage; he has a valuable hostage, Fenena, daughter of the enemy King. Zaccaria gives her into the keeping of Ismaele, nephew of Sedecia, King of Jerusalem. Ismaele, however, is in love with Fenena who obtained

his release from imprisonment in Babylon. He is about to reciprocate her generous action by obtaining her freedom when into the Temple enters Abigaille, who is believed to be Nabucco's first-born daughter, but, in fact, was born a slave. She is at the head of a band of soldiers and is infuriated to see Ismaele and Fenena together for she too is in love with Ismaele. She threatens them with death, but is thwarted by the irruption into the Temple of a number of Jews pursued by Nabucco's soldiers. Nabucco himself, reining in his horse at the threshold, watches the violation of the Temple. Zaccaria raises his dagger against Fenena, but she is saved by Ismaele. The attempt releases the blood lust of the enemies of Israel.

## ACT II

In the royal palace at Babylon. Nabucco, who is fighting in Judea, has left his throne in the keeping of Fenena. Abigaille, having learned the secret of her own slave origin, conspires with the High Priest of Baal to spread the news that the King is dead and to have herself proclaimed his successor. The Levite prisoners gather before Fenena's apartments. With them are Zaccaria and Ismaele. The hatred felt for Ismaele because he saved Fenena from Zaccaria's dagger has turned to esteem now that she has been converted to the Jewish religion. Abigaille and her followers come to carry out her plan for seizing the crown, which Fenena resists. The conflict between the two women is resolved by the unexpected arrival of Nabucco. He snatches the crown from Abigaille's hands and places it upon his head. Then, his reason unseated by success, he proclaims himself not only King but God and commands all present to kneel and adore him. This insane act of pride calls down the wrath of Heaven. Lightning strikes the crown from Nabucco's head. He falls to the ground in terror. Abigaille recovers the crown resolved to carry on the struggle against the Jews in his stead.

## ACT III

### Scene 1.

The hanging gardens of Babylon. Abigaille is seated on the throne surrounded by court dignitaries and priests. Nabucco enters in humble attire. His mind is infirm and when he is left alone with his



supposed daughter he lets her persuade him to put his seal to an order condemning all the Jews to death. He realises too late that he has sealed the death warrant of Fenena also. Abigaille has him removed by the guards.

*Scene 2.*

On the banks of the Euphrates the enslaved Jews sing with nostalgic longing of their homeland the famous chorus : *Va, sull'ali dorate*—"Fly my thoughts, on golden wings, escape to rest among the hills and dales where, fragrant and free, play the indolent breezes of my native land." Zaccaria prophesies that Jehova's vengeance is about to fall on the Babylonian Empire.

ACT IV

*Scene 1.*

A room in the royal palace at Babylon. Nabucco awakes from a dream to hear the name of his daughter Fenena being shouted in the street. He hastens to the balcony and in anguish sees Fenena being led by soldiers to execution through a crowd shouting for her death. In vain Nabucco tries to go to her aid ; he is a prisoner in the palace. Then, by divine inspiration, he kneels and prays to the God of the Jews, asking forgiveness, and swearing everlasting allegiance. The doors are thrown open and soldiers enter to put the old king under further restraint, but his reason has returned. His eyes blaze with anger. The soldiers recognise that he is indeed their king, and with sword in hand they follow him.

*Scene 2.*

In the hanging gardens the High Priest of Baal and other Assyrian dignitaries are gathered round the altar of Baal awaiting the arrival of Fenena and the other Jews who are to be put to death. But before the executions can begin Nabucco enters with his warriors. The idol is thrown down. Nabucco proclaims his homage to Jehovah and freedom for the Jews. Abigaille interrupts the general rejoicing. She has taken poison in despair at the failure of her intrigues. Contritely, as death approaches, she begs the pardon of Fenena. The opera ends as Zaccaria names Nabucco "King of Kings".

MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS

ACT I

Choruses. Zaccaria's *Aria*.  
Concerted finale.

ACT II

Zaccaria's *Prayer*.  
Abigaille's *Cabaletta*  
Concerted finale.

ACT III

*Scene I*

Duet — Abigaille and Nabucco.

*Scene II*

Chorus — *Va, pensiero sull'ali dorate*.

ACT IV

Fenena's *Aria*.  
Concerted finale.

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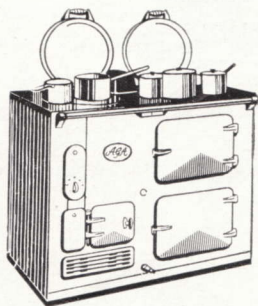


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*for-tissimo*



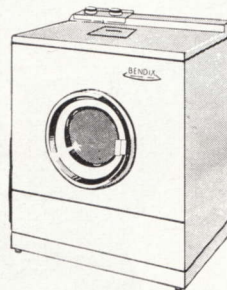
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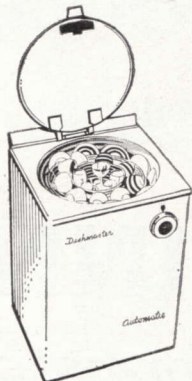
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# LA BOHÈME

*"LA BOHÈME" came after "MANON LESCAUT" and before "TOSCA". For the plot, the librettists, Giacosa and Illica, drew on Murger's novel "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème". The opera's first performance was at the Teatro Regio, Turin, on 1st January, 1896. The young Toscanini was the conductor. On that occasion the reception was mixed but very rapidly the opera became one of the most popular in the entire Italian repertoire.*

## THE STORY OF THE OPERA

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### ACT I

There is no Overture. The curtain rises almost immediately, and discloses a typical Bohemian studio of a poverty-stricken aspect, on Christmas Eve, where the four Bohemians—Rudolph, a poet, Marcel, a painter, Schaunard, a musician, and Colline, a philosopher, live and work. From the window one sees the snow-clad roofs of Paris. But there is no fire in the stove, and Marcel (who is painting a great picture of the Passage of the Red Sea), and Rudolph (who is writing a masterpiece) are very cold. They finally decide to light a fire with the manuscript of one of Rudolph's great tragedies. Colline enters, despondent at not having been able to pawn anything, but regains his spirits at the sight of the cheerful blaze. Their spirits rise still further when Schaunard enters with provisions and wine and explains that he has earned money by playing for a gentleman who was anxious to drown the noise by a neighbour's screeching parrot and by poisoning the bird. They decide to drink and then to dine at a restaurant. The landlord, Benoit, enters demanding his rent, and having drunk some wine, confesses to an escapade, whereat the four artists, in mock indignation, turn him out of the room. Then they propose to go to dinner at the Café Momus in the Quartier Latin, but Rudolph says he must stay in to finish an article for a paper. The others have

scarcely gone when a timid knock is heard at the door and Mimi enters and excuses herself, explaining that as she was on her way to her room her candle had gone out. She is seized with a fit of coughing and swoons, and when she revives she lights her candle and is about to go out, when she remembers that she had put her key on the table. As Rudolph goes to the door his candle, too, is blown out, and they look for the key in the dark, but in vain, for Rudolph has artfully put it in his pocket. As they both grope under the table, their hands meet, and this gives Rudolph his opportunity for singing his Romance "*Che gelida manina*" and he goes on to explain who and what he is. In reply Mimi sings her famous song "*Si, mi chiamano Mimi*". She explains that her real name is Lucia, and she is a flower girl living in an attic in the same house. By this time Rudolph's companions have grown impatient and call for him from below. He answers that he will follow as soon as he can. Then Rudolph passionately declares his love for Mimi in the duet which follows "*O soave fanciulla*", and she calls her to take her with him. As the curtain falls they go out arm-in-arm, singing the last bars of the duet.

### ACT II

#### A STREET IN THE LATIN QUARTER

In the second act we see another aspect of Bohemian life, its reckless irresponsible gaiety, as a background to a human tragi-comedy. We are in a public place outside the Café Momus in the Quartier Latin, the favourite haunt of the four Bohemians who were



nick-named "The Four Musketeers" because they were inseparable. There is a great crowd, the hawkers are plying their trade, all the bustle of Christmas eve is at its height. Colline, Schaunard and Marcel, who have not been able to find room in the crowded café, take possession of a table on the pavement. Rudolph and Mimi join them a little later, the girl wearing a smart bonnet which Rudolph has bought for her. They order supper, and presently Musetta, a former flame of Marcel, enters accompanied by a rich admirer, Alcindoro, a Councillor of State, whom she treats very badly. She sees Marcel and tries in vain to attract his attention. Marcel is in great agitation and his friends enjoy what they call "the stupendous comedy". He is about to go, unable to bear it any longer, when Musetta sings her Waltz song "*Quando Me'n vo'*" which holds him spellbound. Mimi, with feminine intuition, guesses that Musetta and Marcel really love each other. Musetta determines to get rid of her troublesome admirer, feigns to have a great pain in her foot, and sends him to a boot shop to buy a pair of easier shoes. As soon as he is gone Marcel rushes forward to her and a great reconciliation takes place. She joins the merry party and finally they follow the patrol which now enters with its drums and pipes, carrying her off shoulder high, just as Alcindoro enters and is confronted with the bill for the whole party.

### ACT III

#### THE TOLL GATE

About two months have elapsed, and we are taken to an inn on the outskirts of Paris on a frosty morning. The Customs Officers are guarding the gate and vendors of provisions peer through it. From the opposite direction—from Paris—comes Mimi in great agitation, and asks a servant to tell her where Marcel is. She brings him out and Mimi appeals to him—"Oh, good Marcel, oh, help me!". She complains of Rudolph's mad groundless jealousy. Marcel tells her they had better part and she begs him to aid her, and he goes in to wake Rudolph, while Mimi conceals herself behind a tree. Rudolph comes out and explains to Marcel—"I want a separation from Mimi"—. He suspects her, he says, and is heart-broken that he has no money and cannot do anything to cure her of the terrible illness which is killing her. In spite of Marcel's efforts to prevent Mimi from hearing what Rudolph says, she understands and is overcome with grief, and her sobs and coughing reveal her presence to Rudolph; as they fall into each other's arms Musetta's laugh is heard from inside the tavern.

*Sixty-Eight*

While Mimi and Rudolph exchange vows, and Mimi tells him she won't return "*Donde lieta usci*" Musetta and Marcel have a fierce lovers' quarrel, and the blending of tragedy and comedy in the quartet which ensues makes the scene one of the most beautiful in the Opera. As the curtain falls Mimi and Rudolph go out arm-in-arm singing of the happiness which awaits them at the coming of Spring.

### ACT IV

We are now back in the Bohemians' garret. Marcel and Rudolph are talking. Marcel has seen Mimi, and Rudolph has seen Musetta, both living in luxury; each strives to appear indifferent as he hears the story. They utter their feelings, however, in a duet, "*O Mimi tu più non torni*" and Rudolph gazes lovingly at Mimi's old bonnet which he takes from a table drawer. They are interrupted by Schaunard and Colline, who arrive carrying provisions—bread and herrings—and they have a meal, pretending that it is a great banquet. After the meal they grow merry and dance; their games ending with a mock duel with the fire irons between Schaunard and Colline. When the fun is at its height, Musetta enters, greatly agitated, and tells them Mimi is with her but too weak to climb the stairs. Rudolph rushes out and brings her back and places her gently on the bed, and Musetta tells the others how she had found Mimi; she had begged to be allowed to die with Rudolph. Mimi tries to effect a reconciliation between Musetta and Marcel. Mimi is cold and hungry but there is nothing to give her. Musetta takes off her diamond earrings and gives them to Marcel, bidding him sell them and buy food and fetch a doctor and then goes out with him. Colline now makes up his mind to pawn his overcoat and addresses it in mock heroic terms "*Vecchia zimarra, senti*". Schaunard then goes out, leaving Rudolph and Mimi alone. Mimi, who had seemingly been asleep, now speaks to Rudolph, who has all the time been by her bedside "*Sono andati*". They talk of the past, and as they talk the music recalls their first meeting. A violent cough interrupts her, Musetta and Marcel come back, she with a muff, he with medicine. They busy themselves with the medicine, and Mimi eagerly warms her hands with the muff, while Musetta prays for her friend. At this moment, the sun comes out to shine on Mimi's face. Musetta motions Rudolph to hang her cloak over the window. As he does so Mimi falls back dead. Rudolph flings himself on the bed sobbing, while the others stand around, grief stricken, as the curtain falls.



# HISTORICAL NOTES

## ON

### PUCCINI

### IL TRITTICO

In his search for the perfect libretto Puccini cast aside many a good story. After *Manon Lescaut* he was considering *La Lupa* by Verga, a passionate tale in the vein of that author's Cav. At another time *Marie Antoinette* interested him. Illica prepared a scenario. During his discussions with Puccini the fourteen scenes were remorselessly reduced to two. The angry librettist gave up. Other projects with Illica met the same fate: Daudet's *Tartarin*, Zola's *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*. At one time Puccini was considering *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and he hurried off to see Maeterlinck. The author was apologetic; he had already given it to Debussy (and was to regret it later on). Perhaps the theatre narrowly escaped losing Debussy's masterpiece, or would Puccini have rejected this story too, as he did *La Femme et le Pantin* by Debussy's friend Pierre Louys? Vaucaire made a libretto of *La Femme* and put it into French verse. *Conchita*, as Puccini was to call his new opera, for a time seemed likely to come to life. But it never did.

Should his new opera be located in a new country? He had set Germany to music (Le Villi), England (Edgar), France (Manon and Bohème), Italy (Tosca), Japan (Butterfly), America (La Fanciulla del West). Russia scared him. What about Africa? For a time he was interested in lost explorers and natives. D'Annunzio tried hard to interest Puccini in his work. He would give him the perfect libretto, and for a time the two discussed the poet's Children's Crusade. But Puccini could not generate much enthusiasm; their temperaments were not suited. The poet's eloquence belied his performance. More to Puccini's taste was Louise de la Ramée's (*Ouida*) story, *I Due Zoccolotti* (The Two Wooden Shoes). Hope revived among his friends—but not for long. That too petered out (later, Mascagni used the story for his *Lodoletta*).

In 1912 Puccini decided to compose three one-act operas, hoping perhaps that plots for one-acters would be easier to come by. He went to see Didier Gold's play, *La Houppelande*, in Paris, and liked it at once. This story of love among the Seine bargees was promising material. The scenario was drawn up and Puccini got to work with gusto. But the other two operas for his IL TRITTICO did not materialise until 1917, five years later. Forzano showed Puccini the plot of *Gianni Schicchi* in that year and Puccini was delighted with it. Later, Forzano gave the composer the story of SUOR ANGELICA and in this Puccini found the mystical theme he had long been searching for. Europe was in the throes of the first world war: are we to wonder that all these operas are about death? Three aspects of death, in fact; a brutal murder (IL TABARRO), a suicide (SUOR ANGELICA), and the impersonation of a dead man (GIANNI SCHICCHI).

During the composition of SUOR ANGELICA Puccini made many visits to his sister, Iginia, who was a Mother Superior at a convent at Vicopelago. On these occasions the nuns would ask him to play to them on the convent piano. It was usually SUOR ANGELICA. It required much tact to explain the sad predicament of his heroine, but everyone would be in tears by the time he had finished.

As the production at the Costanzi, Rome on 11 January, 1919, IL TRITTICO received praise from all sides. The principals in the three operas were Maria Labia, Di Giovanni, Galeffi, in IL TABARRO, Della Rizza in SUOR ANGELICA, and Galeffi again in GIANNI SCHICCHI.

In later years it has become the practice to perform the operas separately.



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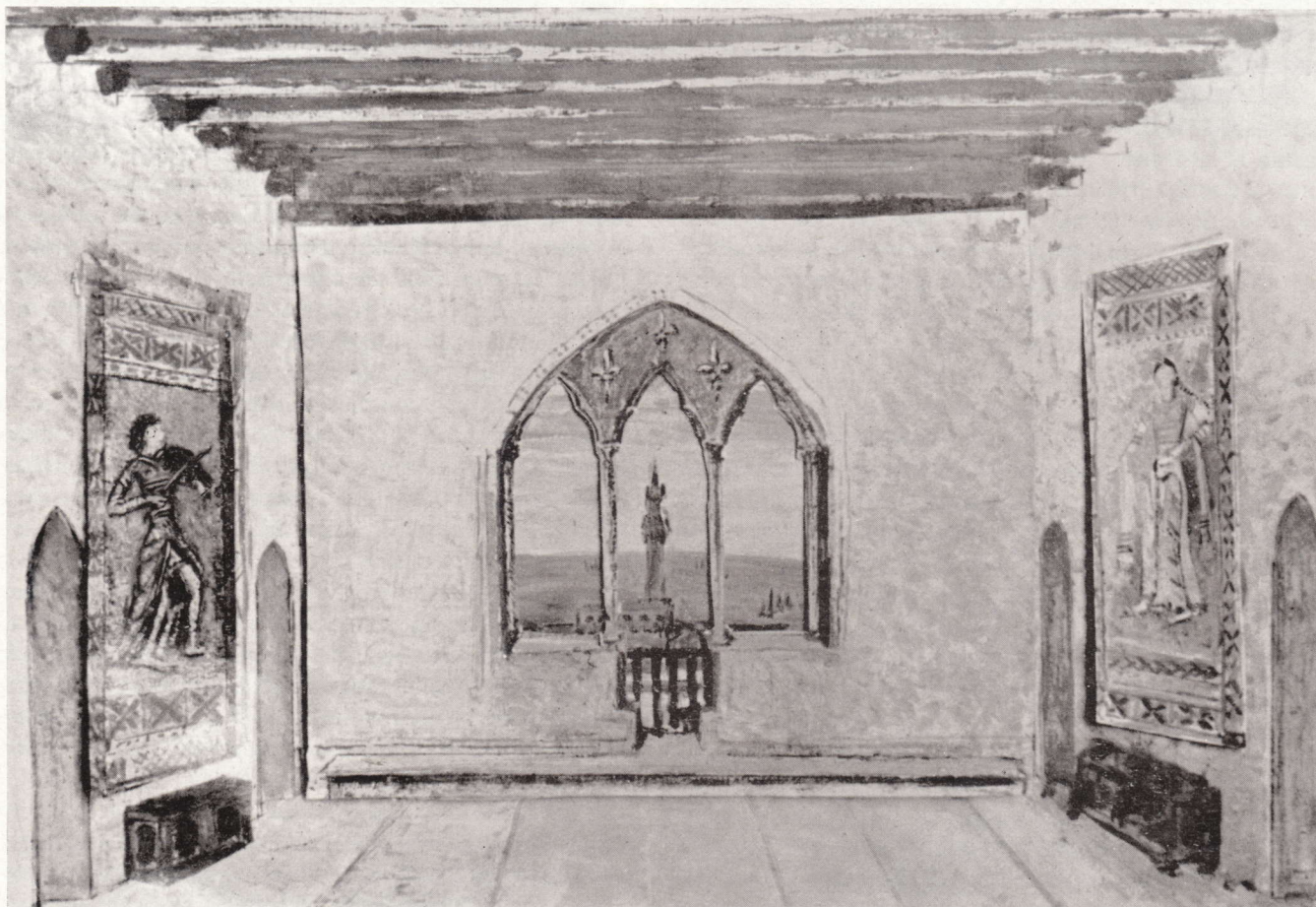
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GIANNI SCHICCHI

*Designed by Tina Sestini Palli*

# GIANNI SCHICCHI

Libretto by Giovacchino Forzano, based on an idea taken from Dante's *INFERNO*.

*First produced at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, 14 December, 1918; Costanzi Theatre, Rome, 11 January 1919.*

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*The opera forms part of IL TRITTICO, a collection of three one-act operas which were first performed at the Metropolitan Opera House, 14 December, 1918; Costanzi Theatre, Rome, 11 January, 1919. First English production at Covent Gardens, 18 June 1920.*

GIANNI SCHICCHI is Puccini's one purely comic work for the stage. It forms the third and most brilliant leaf of his "Triptych"—the collection of one-act operas first produced at the Metropolitan

Opera House, New York, in December, 1918, and nowadays performed together all too rarely. But though Puccini's earlier works were basically tragic there were in most of them, notably *Bohème* of course, elements of the humour which finds its culmination in GIANNI SCHICCHI. One of Puccini's secrets was his uncanny knack of controlling his audience by the timing of incident to the last second, by moulding action with painstaking care to create the maximum



impact. GIANNI SCHICCHI provides triumphant evidence that this calculated mastery in the theatre extended equally to comedy as to tragedy.

Inevitably GIANNI SCHICCHI has often been compared with Verdi's FALSTAFF, both operas come at the end of careers devoted to tragic opera. But too often the merits of Puccini's one-act work have tended to be put in the shade by this obvious comparison. Verdi's work finds profundity in comedy, which is the most rarely found comic quality of all. If Puccini's work scarcely achieves that (after all the physical limits set on the work prevent it) it rises high above the level of farce, on which superficially the plot seems to be set, to create at least one character supremely vital and human. In concentration of comic incident matched by musical inventiveness it stands the closest comparison with even Verdi's work. Both on their different scales are comic masterpieces of the first order.

The exuberance of GIANNI SCHICCHI is a reflection perhaps of Puccini's unusual confidence when he was writing it. It was one of the oddities of of his career that he could not work at all without a libretto that moved and inspired him. His life was made miserable over long periods while he was looking for such a subject. With GIANNI SCHICCHI he knew at once that this was the right choice, and for once gave his librettist no trouble. Where in operas before and after Puccini chased his librettists unmercifully to get exactly what he wanted, this time everything went well from the first. The librettist, Giovacchino Forzano (also the librettist of the companion piece SUOR ANGELICA), took the idea from Dante (Inferno XXV and XXX). But where Dante put his Schicchi in hell for his roguery (there is a suggestion that Dante had personal animosity through his wife coming from the family outwitted by Schicchi). Forzano takes the simple idea and puts it into a *commedia dell'arte* setting. It was a well-loved theme of the *commedia dell'arte* to show the discomfiture of scheming heirs at the hands of a wealthy testator, and the twist in GIANNI SCHICCHI of having a false will dictated by an impostor only adds to the spikiness of the humour.

### THE STORY OF THE OPERA

The opera is set in Florence in 1299. Old Buoso Donati has just died (his body under a sheet lies in the four-poster bed) and his greedy relations have come not only to mourn but to see they have their share of his wealth. The opera opens with a loud flourish on the orchestra then switches at once to a mourning theme, with off-beat accents and short, descending scale-passages. This first appears *tumultuoso*, but quickly settles down to a decorous *largo*

while the relations weep ostentatiously. But then the rumour swiftly passes from lip to lip that Buoso has left all his wealth to the monks of Signa. With the "mourning" theme *allegro vivo* the relatives furiously start looking for the will. After several false alarms it is found by young Rinuccio (tenor), nephew of La Zita. But before he hands it over he makes his aunt promise that he can marry Lauretta, the daughter of Gianna Schicchi, and to show his love the agitated music resolves into the first hint of the main love theme. Crossly, La Zita agrees to the match, and the relatives impatiently open the will to the accompaniment of a ponderous Meistersinger-like "will" theme in C major. Agitatedly the relatives look over one another's shoulders to read the contents. To their horror they find the rumour is quite true. All has gone to the monks. In a venomous ensemble they vent their fury, imagining the monks Signa living off the fat of the land. The music Puccini provides is equally venomous with chugging Stravinskian motor-rhythms and a fascinating passage in which two keys at once vie for supremacy. The uproar is followed by a pause, marking the end of what might almost be thought of as the opera's exposition section—a pause one finds incidentally at parallel points in the first acts of the earlier operas.

The relations debate what can be done at this crisis. Rinuccio suggests that the wily Gianni Schicchi should be called in to advise them, but the others will not hear of this for Schicchi is a social inferior. Just at that moment news comes that Schicchi is on his way to the house, for Rinuccio had already sent word after his aunt's promise. The relations' protests provoke Rinuccio to sing Schicchi's praise in a long, swaggering aria with a central march-like section, again Meistersinger-like ("*Avete torto*"!). As he finishes Schicchi himself enters with Lauretta. He is astonished to see the depth of grief about him (the "mourning" theme returns) and he adds "I have never seen bereavement better acted". La Zita admits the truth, but announces defiantly that her nephew will never be allowed to marry a peasant's daughter. An argument follows in which the energetic music melts into the love theme as Rinuccio and Lauretta despair of ever being united. Rinuccio begs for Schicchi's help on the will, but the peasant is adamant about not helping "such rabble". Lauretta goes on her knees and in the broad, diatonic Grand Tune of "*O mio babbino caro*" tells of the watery fate that must be hers if her father will not give in. This is Puccini parodying the conventions of Grand Opera, his own convention in fact, but no parody has ever had a simpler or more direct charm than this aria.

Schicchi gives in. He begins to march up and down restlessly, thinking deeply, every now and then punctuating his thoughts with exclamations about



the impossibility of finding a solution. Each time Lauretta and Rinuccio burst out with fresh despair and fresh farewells (Grand Opera parody again).

But Schicchi does light on a plan before long, and tells the innocent Lauretta to go on the terrace to feed the birds while he expounds it. He first confirms that no one outside the house knows of Buoso's death. Splendid, he says. Take the body, put out the candles and remake the bed. Startled the relations obey, when suddenly a knock is heard at the door. It is the doctor, paying his usual visit to see Buoso. Buoso is resting and must not be disturbed, the relatives insist, but the doctor is persistent and only when Schicchi from the depths of the bed imitates old Buoso's voice in a comic whine is the doctor persuaded to go. "Victory" shouts Schicchi to a triumphant fanfare theme. He tells the relations to send for a lawyer at once. He will impersonate Buoso and dictate a fresh will. This is the cue for an aria from Schicchi, strangely reminiscent, in one C minor section over staccato chords, of the utterly contrasted, bitter aria of Michele, the bargemaster, at the end of IL TABARRO. The relations burst out with jocular shouts of "*Schicchi! Schicchi!*" in another lively ensemble, but they remember their rival interests quickly enough to ask Schicchi to bequeath certain of Buoso's possessions to each of them. There will remain the three most prized of all—Buoso's mule, his house and the saw-mill at Signa. The sound of the funeral bell suddenly interrupts the clamour. For a moment the relations are horrified. But then news comes that it is for the death of the Mayor's Moorish major-domo. "*Requiescat in pace!*" they cry in undisguised relief. To the accompaniment of the staccato chords from Schicchi's aria each of the relatives then goes slyly up to him and asks to be left (in return for monetary reward) the mule, the house and saw-mills at Signa. To each Schicchi gives a confident "So be it!" ("*Sta bene*").

Now comes the robing scene, another delightful parody of Grand Opera conventions. To a limpid trio in 6/8 time Schicchi is robed in Buoso's night-cap and night-shirt by three of the women, just as though he were being decked as a bride. "O, Gianni Schicchi, nostro salvatore!"—they sing—"Oh Gianni Schicchi, our Saviour!" The disguise is complete, but Schicchi has one more warning to give. By law if anyone is caught falsifying a will, he says, his hand will be cut off and he will be exiled from the city. As he sings of this frightening penalty Schicchi flaps the empty

sleeves of his night-shirt. The relatives repeat the melancholy refrain "*Addio, Firenze!*"—"Florence, good-bye"! The notary arrives to a fresh enunciation of the "will" theme. The "mourning" theme and Schicchi's triumphant fanfare are also referred to, and as the formal Latin words to preface the will are repeated the "will" theme is expanded academically in four-part counterpoint. To the formal words Schicchi adds prudently "*Annullans, revocans et irritans omne aliud testamentum*". "What foresight" the relatives exclaim in admiration.

Schicchi proceeds to make the will. Don't spend more than two florins on the funeral, he orders, and the relations mutter approval. Proceeding to his bequests he lists first the monks of Signa. The relatives are horrified, but the bequest is for five lira only. "Doesn't that sound rather a little?" says the lawyer, but Schicchi has the answer, "When somebody leaves a lot to the Church busybodies will always say 'Now what he stole he's repaying'"! He then goes on to the other agreed bequests, giving to each of the relatives the item specially asked for. This still leaves the mule, the house and the saw-mills at Signa. With a great pause Schicchi lists the mule, but to everyone's horror instead of going on to name one of the relatives the counterfeit Buoso makes the bequest to "my devoted friend, Gianni Schicchi." He brushes aside the protests with "I know what is best for Gianni Schicchi!". So with the house (amid increasing fury) and finally the saw-mills at Signa. All goes to Gianni Schicchi, though by this time he has to sing "*Addio, Firenze!*" to keep everyone within bounds. At last the lawyer leaves, and the relatives rise up in a last furious ensemble, grabbing and tearing at everything they can. But Schicchi masterfully turns them all out, for the house is now his.

In the calm which follows—reminiscent of the calm after uproar that ends Act 2 of Die Meistersinger—the lovers enter from the terrace. They sing their last happy duet to the music of the love theme. Gianni sees them in one another's arms, and addresses the audience: "Tell me, ladies and gentlemen, could you imagine a better use for Buoso's money? For my little tomfoolery my friends have consigned me to perdition . . . Well, Amen to that! But in giving great Dante all due credit for the plot of our play, if you have enjoyed yourselves this evening, I trust you will applaud a verdict of Not Guilty!" And with a final repetition of his triumphant fanfare theme Schicchi bows himself out.



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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM ABOVE RECORDING:

33CX. 1682

Act 1: Che piu t'arresti? ... Tacea la notte; Di geloso amor.  
Act 2: Vedi! le fosche (Anvil Chorus) ... Stride la Vampa!; Mal reggendo all'aspro assalto.  
Act 3: Di quella pira.  
Act 4: Siam giunti ... Timor di me? ... D'amor sull'an rosee ... Miserere; Mira, di acerbe lagrime ... Colui Vivra! Si, la Stanchezza m'opprime; Ai nostri monti; Ti scosta!

## EXCERPTS FROM ABOVE RECORDING:

SEL. 1641

Act 1: Tacea la notte ... di tale amor.  
Act 4: Siam giunti ... D'amor sull'an rosee.

SEL. 1671

Act 1: Tacea la notte! Deserto sulla terra: Di geloso amor.  
Act 2: Vedi! le fosche (Anvil Chorus) Stride la Vampa!

SEL. 1678

Act 2: Mal reggendo ... Un momento ... Il balen del suo sorriso ... Ardir! andiam. Sel. 1689.  
Act 3: In braccio al mio rival! ... Giorni poveri vivea ... Ah! Deh! rallentate; Ah, si, ben mio ... L'onda de' suoni mistici ... Di quella pira.

## LA BOHEME (Puccini)

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## EXCERPTS FROM ABOVE RECORDING:

7ER. 5179

Act 1: Che gelida manina ... Si, mi chiamano Mimi ... O soave fanciulla.

7ER. 5186

Act 2: Quando me'nvo' (Musetta's Waltz Song).  
Act 3: E. Freddo, Entrate; Addio Chel Vai Donde lieta uscì ...  
Act 4: In un coupe? ... O Mimi tu piu non torni.

7ER. 5190

Act 4: Sono andati? ... Dorme? Riposa.

## LA BOHEME (Puccini)

33CX. 1464/5

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## SUOR ANGELICA (Puccini)

ALP. 1577

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## GIANNI SCHICCHI (Puccini)

ALP. 1726

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SEL. 1647

Averte torto! ... Firenze e come un albero fiorito; Sel. 1546 O mio babbino caro.

## LUCIA DI LAMMER-MOOR (Donizetti)

33CX. 1131/2

Complete Recording in Italian with Maria Callas, Giuseppe di Stefano, Tito Gobbi, with Orchestra and Chorus of "Maggio Musicale Fiorentino" conducted by Tullio Serafin.

## EXCERPTS FROM ABOVE RECORDING:

33CX. 1385

Regnava nel silenzio; Sulla tomba che rinserra; Appressati Lucia ... Il pallor funesto orrendo; Dov'è Lucia? ... Chi mi frena (Sextet); Oh giusto cielo! ... Ardon gl'incensi (Mad Scene).

SEL. 1522

Regnava nel silenzio: Fra poco a me ricovero ... Tombe degl'avi miei. ...

33CX. 1723/4

Complete Recording in Italian with Maria Callas, Ferruccio Tagliavini, Piero Cappuccilli, Bernard Ladysz, Leonard del Ferro, Margreta Elkins, Renzo Cassellato, Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Tullio Serafin.

7ER. 5173

Act 2: Chi mi frena (Sextet) (Galli-Curci, Gigli, De Luca, Homer, Pinza and Bada).

## LA TRAVIATA (Verdi)

33CX. 1370/1

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SEL. 1624

Act 1: Libiamo (Brindisi) Non gradireste ora le danze (Waltz) Un di Felice ...

SEL. 1630

Act 1: Ah! fors' e lui ... Sempre libera (Finale).  
Act 2: De' miei bollenti spiriti; Pura siccome un angelo.

SEL. 1636

Act 2: Bella voi siete; Dite alla giovine; Imponete.

SEL. 1644

Act 2: Di Provenza Il mar.  
Act 3: Addio del passato; Ah Violetta; Prendi quest' e L'immagine.

ALP. 1780/1/2

Complete Recording in Italian with Victoria de los Angeles, Santa Chisari, Silvia Bertona, Carlo del Monte, Mario Sereni, and Orchestra and Chorus of the Rome Opera House conducted by Tullio Serafin.

## NABUCCO (Verdi)

SEL. 1571

Act 3: Va pensiero, sull'ali dorate by La Scala, Milan, Chorus.

ALP. 1585

Act 3: O chi piange? ... Del futuro nel buio by Boris Christoff.

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# SUOR ANGELICA

## *The Story of the Opera*

The action takes part in a convent in the latter part of the 17th century.

It is evening and the sisters are singing in chapel. Two lay sisters enter, late for the service, also Sister Angelica, who kneels and kisses the threshold (the act of penance by latecomers). When the sisters leave the chapel the lay sisters are admonished by the Monitor because they did not make a penance for their lateness. The Abbess leaves and the sisters question Sister Angelica about her family. For seven years she has not seen her relations. They know that she is a princess but why did she have to take the veil? A nursing sister hurries in and speaks urgently to Sister Angelica. Sister Chiara has been stung by wasps and is in pain. Sister Angelica gives her some herbs that will soothe the wasp stings. Two donkeys loaded with gifts are led in. The sisters gather round and take the gifts to the Sister Procurator. One of the sisters tells Sister Angelica that a coach is at the outside door. It must be a visitor and soon they will hear the warning bell. Sister Angelica questions her about the coach and its occupant and becomes anxious and pale. At the sound of the bell other sisters run in excitedly. The Abbess enters and calls Sister Angelica. Her aunt, the Princess, has come to see her. A dark figure is admitted and goes towards Sister Angelica, eyeing her coldly. Sister Angelica is so moved by the sight of her aunt after so many years that she falls to her knees. Sternly her aunt informs her that she has brought a document for Sister Angelica to sign,

by which she will renounce her inheritance in favour of her young sister, Anna Viola, who is about to be married. Her aunt has only one piece of advice for Sister Angelica—repentance, always to repent her sin. Sister Angelica reproaches her aunt. In an impassioned aria she declares that she can never forget her son (*Tutto offerto*), and thus we learn of the misfortune which brought her to the convent. Coldly her aunt tells her that her son died two years ago. Sister Angelica falls to the ground with a heart-broken cry. The Abbess comes in with writing materials. Sister Angelica drags herself to her feet and with a trembling hand signs the document. Her aunt leaves her without another word.

Desperately unhappy, Sister Angelica mourns her dead child (*Senza mamma, o bimbo, tu sei morto*). The sisters comfort her and then all go to their cells. It grows dark. A cell door opens and Sister Angelica reappears carrying an earthenware jar. She lights a fire and places the jar over it to brew a poison with her herbs, while she sings farewell to her sisters (*Addio, buone sorelle*). She kisses the cross at the shrine and taking the jar drinks the poison. Almost at once she is overcome with terror at her guilty act. A chorus begins to sing offstage. The chapel is suffused with light and slowly at the door a vision appears of the Blessed Virgin preceded by a child. Urged by the Blessed Virgin the child moves towards the dying girl.



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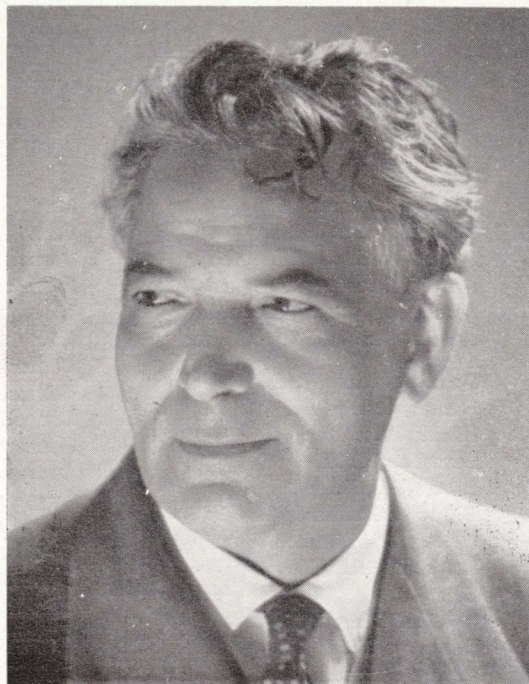
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# SALVATORE ALLEGRA

is a native of Palermo. He studied composition under Cilea and del Favara. He is the author of numerous symphonic and operatic compositions. His most successful operas, besides "MEDICO SUO MALGRADO", have been "I VIANDANTI", "AVE MARIA" (performed by the D.G.O.S. in Dublin in Spring 1959) and "ROMULUS".

His more recent works have included the instrumental trio "SONATA IN UN TEMPO" (Ed. Carisch); "INTRODUCTION AND ALLEGRO" for piano/forte (Ed. Curci) and the opera set in Sicily "L'ISOLA DEGLI INCANTI" (Isle of Enchantment) (Ed. Mercurio).



## MEDICO SUO MALGRADO

*This one-act opera is a free rendering by Alberto Donini of Molière's celebrated comedy "LE MEDECIN MALGRÉ LUI". It received its first performance in 1938 at the State Theatre, Kassel.*

Lucinda's (Soprano) rich father, Geronte (Baritone) wishes to have her marry a wealthy but elderly friend of his. She, however, is in love with a young man, Leandro (Tenor) and in order to upset her father's plan she pretends she has suddenly been struck dumb. It would appear that only a very great physician indeed could hope to work the miracle of restoring her speech. Geronte's servants are dispatched in search of such a one. Soon they encounter Martina (Mezzo-Soprano), wife of Sganarello (Baritone) the wood-cutter. She is still smarting from a painful quarrel with her husband who, mindful of the advice of a doctor whose servant he had been for many years, banishes "wifely vapours" by means of a very simple remedy—*sugo di bachetta* (lit. switchbalm)—or a sound caning. Martina, hearing of the servants' mission, thinks she sees her chance of getting even with her husband and recommends him as a doctor of unique and miraculous skill. "But beware", she warns, "that man is an eccentric type and at times

it is his whim to pretend he is only a simple wood-cutter. In fact, your only chance of forcing him to exercise his medical skill is to give him a good beating first."

So, persuaded by blows and the promise of a sack of money, Sganarello agrees to take on the task. A series of complications and impersonations ensues. The sly Sganarello soon divines that Lucinda's real malady is called Leandro, whom he now presents to Geronte as his assistant to whose care Lucinda should be committed. There follows the flight of the lovers to hide in the woods. Further confusions and complications lead to the final scene where Lucinda and Leandro re-appear together with the postman from whom Leandro receives a letter containing the news of the death of a very wealthy uncle who has named him his universal heir.

Confronted with that powerful argument Geronte, in a scene of general rejoicing, withdraws his opposition to the marriage of the young couple. Even Sganarello is forgiven and from his enforced role of "*Medico suo malgrado*" reverts to his old employment—less profitable, to be sure, but certainly more peaceful—of wood-cutter.



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